

Just another bit of paper?

This is the third issue of "Face the Race" - the first produced by the newly formed (July 1984) Policy Planning Group (Ethnic Minorities). What is its purpose? To start with - what it is not. It does not presume to speak for all black workers in the Department - that would be arrogant given only a small proportion are represented on the P.P.G. Its main aim is to raise awareness of black issues at all levels in the Department. It will do this by reporting on the activities of the PPG and by disseminating information/news/views you bring to our attention. So your contributions will be warmly welcomed.

Your help is sought in the first instance to come up with a more appropriate title for the news sheet. Any (useable!) suggestions would be gratefully received.

The PPG's focus has two main elements namely employment issues and service delivery issues. We take up the theme of employment this time, important not just because as a major employer our commitment to equal opportunities is critical but also because of the inevitable spin-off of employment policies on service delivery. The more specific strategies for the improvement of services to the black community will be picked up in the next issue.

Equal Opportunities?

About 18 months ago recruitment advertisements published both locally and nationally began to include the statement "Nottinghamshire County Council is an Equal Opportunity Employer". In other words, the County Council along with the recognised Trade Unions committed itself to the development of positive policies to promote equal opportunities in employment, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, creed, disability, sex, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Towards the end of 1984 the results of the Equal Opportunities Head Count conducted by the County Personnel Officer showed that only 2.2% of the total staff employed within the Social Services Department are black. (We weren't the lowest (Fire Service 0.01%) but then again we weren't the highest (County Offices 10.6%).

At the present moment in time there is no system for monitoring the ethnic origin of

- a) applicants for vacant posts
- b) newly appointed staff
- c) existing staff

There is obviously a need for some type of monitoring to be introduced in order that the Department may identify problem areas within the recruitment field such as:-

- i) Is there evidence that individuals from ethnic minority groups do not apply for employment or fewer apply than might be expected?
- ii) Is there evidence that employees from ethnic minority groups do not apply for promotion or fewer apply than might be expected?
- iii) Is there evidence that individuals from ethnic minority groups apply for jobs but are not recruited or promoted at all or who are appointed in a significantly lower proportion than their rate of application?

- iv) Is there evidence that ethnic minority group members are under-represented in jobs carrying higher pay, status or authority?
- v) Are there sections of the department staffed entirely or mostly by a particular group?

This information could be provided via the application form and the information collated within Staffing Section. Before embarking upon such a system, however, we must be sure of what we will do with it when we have it!

Training News

There have recently been a number of training initiatives. Two days were held on "racism awareness" in October for a mix of City based staff, to coincide with the new black workers taking up their posts in Areas and Day Nurseries.

There have been 2 separate days for residential social workers on the needs of black children in care. There have been other initiatives such as in the Substitute Family Care Workers Group and in various offices, teams and establishments. There is now a need to build up the training resources so that training can make a greater impact in a more systematic way.

The role of the chair

My role as Chairman of the Policy Planning Group (Ethnic Minorities) is threefold.

1. Is to co-ordinate and to some extent direct our work via members of the PPG on two broad issues - services for clients and the Department as employer. We are seeking to clarify within the group some objectives for 1985 and strategies to meet those objectives.
2. Is to link the Department's work in this field with the County Council's approach where there are corporate meetings of officers and a consultative mechanism with the representatives of the Ethnic Community.
3. To ensure that the work of the PPG (Ethnic Minorities) does not proceed in isolation from other Policy Planning work within the Department.

Deputy Director.

New member needed

The PPG Ethnic Minorities are looking for someone who is interested or working in the physically handicapped field to replace Simon Singh, who due to other work commitments is unable to continue as a member of the PPG and to have responsibility for the SUB Group Physical Handicap.

If anyone is interested - contact Mr. Newell on Extension 4070 at County Hall.