

## **EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE EOC 08-02(p2)**

**Date:** 12 December 2002  
**Time:** 9.00am  
**Venue:** Committee Rooms 3 and 4  
**Title:** Progress on implementing the recommendations of the Lifting Every Voice Report

### **Progress on Lifting Every Voice Report**

#### **Introduction**

1. Lifting Every Voice (LEV) was the result of a partnership agreement between the National Assembly for Wales and the Public and Commercial Services Union. The report was presented by me to the Equality of Opportunity Committee on 21 March 2001.
2. This short note represents my impression of the progress being made so far on the implementation of LEV. My impressions are based on the evidence contained within paperwork presented to the Committee at its November and December meetings.

#### **Progress so Far**

3. The 18 of the 43 recommendations contained within LEV have, apparently, now been completed. A further 23 recommendations are in the process of being actioned whilst a further 2 relate to the audit process.
4. The Assembly has much to be pleased about in the manner in which staff have gone about the task of implementing the 18 recommendations it has done so far. For this much credit must go to the political commitment that the Assembly has shown to the process and the leadership at an official level by the Permanent Secretary. Whilst the completion of each of the recommendations is a milestone in itself they must, in my view, be seen as a vehicle for change and not an end in themselves. They must also be seen as part of a complete package.
5. A number of other recommendations related to the staffing, function, status and role of the Equality Policy Unit. Again much has been done to implement these recommendations including the recent upgraded appointment of a new Head of Unit. I share some of the concerns about the process expressed by the Committee at its meeting of 14 November 2002. I will elaborate on these points orally to the Committee but I found some aspects of the process such as the use of CVs and psychometric tests as somewhat concerning and, in my view, unnecessary. Indeed I understand that there has been some use of

assessment centres in the selection processes within the Assembly. I am not sure what purpose these centres serve but if they have involved the further use of psychometric testing I would also have some concerns.

6. Training for all staff and Assembly Members was at the very heart of the overall strategy of LEV. I am pleased to see the progress that is being made in training staff and Members. I would just say that this training, in common with the rest of the implementation of LEV must be as closely linked to the implementation of the duties contained within the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 as possible.

7. The major outstanding issue of LEV is the open competition for all posts. It would be an understatement to say that this issue has turned into the most controversial of the 43 recommendations. I look forward to an agreement being reached with the unions so that this recommendation can be delivered as soon as possible. The guiding principle behind this recommendation bears restating. To achieve the fundamental change in the way that the Assembly looks and behaves the means of attracting new and more diverse talent into the organisation must be found. Merely shuffling the existing pack upwards will create, in my view, a two tiered organisation with white staff predominantly at the top with black staff primarily at the bottom. That's why my proposal was for all posts to be opened up to competition with a fresh look at what is required for each post.

### **Overall Impressions**

8. Overall I think some bold strides have been made in implementing LEV. There will be some who think that things have not moved fast enough and others who believe that actually things have gone quite far enough. Given the direction mapped out in LEV and committed to by Assembly Members and the Permanent Secretary the final judgement must be based on the level by which any targets are achieved and the confidence that the local community has in relation to the Assembly and its race equality work. Time will tell.

**Roger Mckenzie**

**Author of Lifting Every Voice**