



Recruiting, retaining and progressing the careers of minority ethnic staff in the Probation Service

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE

for England and Wales

Enforcement, rehabilitation and public protection

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FOREWORD

FOREWORD

It has long been recognised that the National Probation Service, without being complacent, has a good record in the recruitment of minority ethnic staff, a leader amongst the criminal justice family. But the problems start when we come to look at retention and progression, where much work needs to be done both to understand the problem and how to resolve it. Indeed, the need for such a study formed one of the key recommendations of the Probation Service's Report to the Home Secretary ***Race Equality – Developing Minority Ethnic Representation in Probation Services***. This is the background to Conroy's assignment. He pulls no punches and his report has been eagerly awaited by all minority ethnic staff and their staff associations. It should not be considered in isolation but as complementing and building upon all the other work undertaken by the Race Equality Implementation Group and HMI in their Thematic.

The overriding consideration now is to give effect to all these proposals and we will be redrafting the Action Plan of REIG to ensure that these and other issues affecting minority ethnic staff, while having a more general application to all staff, do not get lost in a wave of other issues enveloping NPS at present.

I commend Conroy's Report to you.

EITHNE WALLIS
NATIONAL DIRECTOR

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study were:

1. To undertake a study to investigate and identify the key issues and factors which impact on the retention and career progression of minority ethnic staff in probation services, paying particular attention to the performance appraisal process and other human resources procedures and practices.
2. As part of the study, to identify support frameworks and measures which minority ethnic staff would find helpful in encouraging them to stay with the probation service and develop into more senior roles.
3. To identify best practice in probation services and across the public and private sectors in relation to the retention and development of minority ethnic staff that would help inform probation service policy and practice in this area.
4. Based on 1 to 3 above, to make detailed recommendations to improve the retention and career progression of minority ethnic staff for the consideration of the Diversity Strategy Board, and put forward proposals for a national strategy in this respect.
5. Based on the findings of the above study, to provide advice and guidance on how best to take forward recommendations 19 and 20 of the report to the Home Secretary ***Race Equality – Developing Minority Ethnic Representation in Probation Services***¹ and in relation to the proposal under recommendation 18 to commission an independent agent to undertake exit interviews with minority ethnic staff.
6. To review current approaches to training about race issues and to make recommendations as to how these may be best built upon and improved.

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

This project emerged from the action plan in the Home Office report ***Developing Minority Ethnic Representation in Probation Services*** which was intended to create a momentum for positive action initiatives on race. The project was from the outset subject to a tight and fixed time scale.

The methodology outlined below was designed to encourage the 'buy in' of all groups that we encountered during the project but to pay particular attention to securing the personal and public commitment of the services minority ethnic staff. One major aim was to facilitate the maximum minority ethnic staff involvement as they were the main focus for the project, and to gather knowledge of best practice processes and systems that would benefit all probation staff.

We decided to use a combination of focus groups, one-to-one interviews and a 'best practice' search of the public and private sectors to generate our data. We would use an iterative process where the documents at *Appendix 9* informed the first focus groups. Data generated by the first focus groups would be analysed and the main findings tested further in one-to-one interviews. The emergent conclusions from the groups, interviews and best practice search would be fed back to a final round of focus groups to 'test' the support for the conclusions and solutions proposed in this report.

Focus groups are a valuable mechanism for identifying perceptions and testing certain types of hypothesis. They are useful for identifying issues of concern and the likely support for certain actions or solutions. They operate by focusing and guiding discussion through a structured process. They therefore cover critical issues although, inevitably, where time is limited, general debate is minimised.

We recognised that projects of this nature, however worthwhile, have the potential to raise the public profile of the target group thereby increasing their visibility and the likelihood of hostility and personal attacks. Such projects can therefore be undermined by the very people they are intended to assist or by those with the responsibility for implementation. We therefore decided to invite those who would benefit from the recommendations and those who would implement them to assist us by identifying effective frameworks and measures that were flexible enough to support and develop an officer from recruitment to retirement.

The overall process looked like this:

Liaison with key groups (ABPO, NAAPS, ACOP) to facilitate participation of staff.

Letters were sent to ACOP, CPC, NAAPS & ABPO on 4/4/00 introducing ourselves, outlining the project and asking them to inform us of staff who fitted the focus group and interview profile and to facilitate the involvement of suitable participants. Dates were given for the first focus groups in May (see *Appendix 1*). These letters were followed by telephone conversations with the chairs of ACOP and ABPO and a meeting with the chair of NAAPS. Numerous messages were left for and received from CPC but, despite attempts on both sides we were never able to speak.

Phase one focus groups

The focus groups were set up to generate three broad bands of data:

1. The barriers perceived by minority ethnic staff to impact significantly upon their tenure and career progression. These might include the hurdles to any prestigious job, the hurdles they create for themselves and those that were created just for them.

2. The reasons why so many minority ethnic applicants were recently successful in gaining middle management posts (views from recruits and recruiters).
3. Probation policies, systems and structures that either have to be adjusted or developed to encourage retention and career progression.

These focus groups depended on the assistance of CPOs and the co-operation of ABPO and NAAPS to identify and encourage the participation of relevant staff. Focus groups were held in accessible geographical locations i.e. London and Birmingham with the support of the CPO's of the Inner London and West Midlands Probation Services who provided meeting rooms.

The first focus groups concerned one-to-one interviews and the search for best practice; then the second focus groups to comment on emerging issues, the one-to-one interviews and the search for best practice.

The first phase involved facilitating six focus groups for:



'Lead' questions for phase one of the focus groups can be found at *Appendix 2*. And the source and context of questions can be found at *Appendix 9*.

One to one qualitative interviews

The intention was to conduct 25 interviews lasting approximately one hour but we were only successful in completing 18. Persons interviewed included experienced practitioners, experienced administrative staff, newly promoted middle managers, experienced operational and admin managers, ACO's in post, on secondment and those no longer working for the service. The difficulties in arranging the interviews proved a source of frustration for all involved. We were, however, concerned to learn from minority ethnic staff from four of the 21 services with whom we had contact, that they had only learnt of the focus groups and interviews in casual conversations with colleagues in other services rather than from their own management.

Search for best practice in the public and private sectors

This involved a literature review followed by contact with the organisations mentioned in the literature or those with a public reputation for innovative or good practice in human resource management. 'Contact' took the form of semi-structured interviews exploring how they recruit, develop and promote their personnel. Interviews were conducted with 12 organisations spanning 11 industries in the private and public sectors.

Phase two focus groups

Towards the end of the project a final round of focus groups considered and commented on

the emerging themes from phase one groups, the search for best practice and the one-to-one interviews

Conclusion

In total 50 people participated in the focus groups and 18 in the one-to-one interviews. The individuals seen came from a variety of cultural and professional backgrounds. They possessed a wide range of experience as practitioners, administrators and managers. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from 12 organisations in the private and public sectors. This is a significant sample for a research project and we are satisfied that the consistency of the views and experiences shared by focus group and one-to-one interviewees suggest that they are indicative of the experiences and views of other minority ethnic staff in the Probation Service.

- 1.1** Sir William Macpherson writing at the conclusion of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry² said “The message is uncompromising. A new atmosphere of mutual confidence and trust must be created. The onus to begin the process, which will create that new atmosphere, lies firmly and clearly with the police. The Police Services must examine every aspect of their policies and practices to assess whether the outcome of their actions creates or sustains patterns of discrimination. The provision of policing services to a diverse public must be appropriate and professional in every case. Every individual must be treated with respect. ‘Colour-blind’ policing must be outlawed. The police must deliver a service which recognises the different experiences, perception and needs of a diverse society.”
- 1.2** Recent studies and inspection reports on staffing and service delivery³ suggest that this quote from the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry is as applicable to the Probation Service as it is to the police. It is axiomatic that, any organisation that is serious about the professional delivery of an appropriate service to its customers (community, offenders, sentencers) must begin by addressing the management and development needs of its own staff.

INTRODUCTION
The Current Operational Staffing Position (statistics on other grades not available)

Grade	1995		1998		1999	
	ME staff	All staff	Increase or decrease in ME staff from 1995	Increase or decrease in ME staff from 1998	ME staff	All staff
CPO	0	54	0	0	0	54
DCPO	0	25	0	0	0	13
ACPO	8	247	-4	-1	3	196
Area Manager	0	New grade	+3	0	3	49
SPO	39	1,175	+4	+13	58	1,033
Senior Practitioner	0	New grade	0	+3	3	81
Main grade	544	5,997	+48	+90	682	7,809
All minority ethnic PO's	591		621		749	

Chief Probation Officer (CPO), Deputy Chief Probation Officer (DCPO), Assistant Chief Probation Officer (ACPO), Senior Probation Officer (SPO), Research & Information Officer (RIO), Minority ethnic (ME)

All minority ethnic staff in probation grades 1995 to 1999

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
591	618	621	642	747

Minority ethnic probation managers 1995 to 1999

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
47	45	42	50	67

- 1.3** Between 1995 and 1997 across all Probation Areas the total number of minority ethnic probation officers increased by 30 and the number of managers decreased by five. It was positive that between 1998 and 1999 the total number of minority ethnic probation officers increased by 128 and the number of managers increased by 25. This shows that it is possible through a focused campaign to recruit minority ethnic staff into the service and the management grades. However, the experience of the police in recruiting and retaining minority ethnic staff⁴ suggests that the Home Secretary's employment targets will be unlikely to result in a sustainable increase of minority ethnic staff in the management grades, unless services also address the issue of retention.
- 1.4** This report sets out a holistic and sustainable approach for the recruitment, retention and progression of minority ethnic staff in the Probation Service. Many of the recommendations can be implemented speedily and with little cost. Others require a fundamental shift in attitude and practice that must begin immediately, but which should be seen as processes requiring continual improvement

(Source: Probation Statistics England and Wales 1999)

2 KEY ISSUES FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS AND ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEWS

- 2.1** Overall, responses from participants in the focus groups and one-to-one interviews were remarkably consistent. Regardless of race, gender, seniority or location the same messages were given repeatedly. Additionally, chief officers and administrative staff identified issues that were particularly relevant for their roles or seniority.
- 3.0 General points**
- 3.1** Participants were pleased at the increase in the number of African, African/Caribbean and Asian staff joining the Service, but they highlighted recurring difficulties for those same staff in successfully gaining promotion within the organisation. They expressed the view that the Probation Service is failing to capitalise on the talent that exists amongst minority ethnic staff, and failing to understand the benefits for the service, of having real diversity in operational and management grades. They were clear that the service needs to fully understand the meaning and benefits of diversity.
- 3.2** The issue of ‘champions’ was significant for many participants who described progress in their service, when a ‘race champion’ existed, particularly one of a senior enough grade who had good access to the most senior managers. However, when the champion moved on, for whatever reason, race issues again took a ‘back seat’. The staff involved felt that they were starting over again from square one. There was a strong sense that whilst ‘champions’ are welcomed, these initiatives should be an integral part of probation policy and practice, for which management and other staff are held accountable.
- 3.3** Minority ethnic staff and managers say they cope daily with small indignities and bad treatment from some white colleagues and staff. Understandably, this treatment impacts significantly upon their morale. Participants’ comments suggest that these white colleagues either do not see the impact of their behaviour or, they are confident that no one will support a challenge against them for that behaviour. For staff to behave in this way towards their manager implies a lack of respect. However, it also indicates how management authority and power can be seen to be less significant than race. In practice, this attitude can significantly undermine the authority of minority ethnic managers and encourage negative attitudes and stereotypes about minority ethnic people. This same phenomenon was identified by the HMI thematic inspection ‘Towards Race Equality’. This showed that 57% of minority ethnic staff who participated in the survey said they had received racial abuse from colleagues. The inspection report also showed that white managers often felt powerless to challenge this behaviour or support the victim. Participants in this study said that white colleagues seem unwilling to hear about these experiences *“they have an ‘oh no, not the race card again’ attitude when we try to discuss what is happening and how we are feeling about it”*.
- 3.4** Most people talked about their lack of trust and confidence in their line managers’ willingness and ability to understand their needs and provide appropriate support and development i.e. one manager spoke with feeling about his manager’s resistance to discussing a professional life beyond the current role. Another described having to *“squeeze”*

him (the line manager) for a bit of appreciation. A PO of 10 years said *“there have been times when I feel I’ve been subtly discouraged. She has discouraged me from running a series of groups which would have been developmental, even though I discussed the developmental potential with her. She did this for her own reasons”*. There were also examples of good practice. One senior manager said *“he championed me, or balanced his peers who may have had some doubts about me”*. One highly experienced PO said he had an agreement that *“I will identify an area of work in which I can take responsibility and my SPO will give me responsibility for it. We both benefit”*.

Participants with little trust and confidence said this was based on experiences in the service that included:

- Incidents of racial abuse from service users in the office where the manager was unsupportive and one where the manager comforted the angry perpetrator
- Managers who kept silent when white colleagues expressed anger that minority ethnic staff wanted race issues on the team agenda
- Managers who only ever criticised and never found anything to praise
- Managers who wrote references that were vague or highlighted poor practices that had never been brought to the individual’s attention before that person applied for promotion
- Managers who were publicly cosy and proactively supportive with white staff but distant and reactive with minority ethnic staff.

For a few participants, the mistrust included grave doubts about their managers’ intention towards them. The most poignant of these statements was: *“They (management) have treated me so badly; not challenging very bad behaviour towards me, even appearing to me to support it, that if they were to change behaviour now I wouldn’t trust their actions or intentions”*.

4.0 Recruitment

4.1 Many participants described the negative experience of a forty-minute Eurocentric interview, by a committee, for management and other posts. They felt strongly that such a process could not adequately identify the breadth of a candidate’s experience, capability and skills. They thought this approach to staff selection was dated, out of touch and unfair for most candidates but particularly disadvantageous for minority ethnic candidates. The belief was that selection based on a brief question and answer session would inevitably be most influenced by the way candidates looked, sounded and carried themselves. One person gave the example of a large group of potential black probation officer trainees in their service, who had submitted excellent written applications. As a result they were called for interview and without exception, they did extremely well with all practical tests. However, they all subsequently failed the formal forty-minute interview and were not selected.

KEY ISSUES FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS AND ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEWS

- 4.2** Most focus group participants said they were interviewed by Probation Committee members who then decided whether or not they were appointable. There was a strong sense that many committee members were not close enough to the roles that staff perform on a day-to-day basis to make informed judgements about appointments. Participants also strongly expressed the view that many committees or boards do not reflect the population from which recruits are drawn and they were concerned that this might result in bias against minority ethnic candidates. Participants wanted appointment panels to be more reflective of the community and to contain more operational and specialist personnel managers trained in recruitment and selection techniques.
- 4.3** Assessment centres were suggested as a good way forward, providing they were themselves, not Eurocentric in their design and delivery. Many assessment centres in fact do have a Eurocentric bias but this seems to be a reflection of the design team rather than an inherent feature of assessment centres.
- 5.0 Career development**
- 5.1** Practical support and assistance with career development from line management seems to be sensible management practice. It demonstrates the manager's interest in their staff, it helps to ensure that the organisation has capable staff to fill future vacancies and it can help to create a genuine bond between supervisor and supervisee that is invaluable in times of crisis and increased stress. However, 7 of the 18 people interviewed said they could not recall receiving any practical support and assistance with career development from their management. This lack of good practice on the part of some managers is undermining the organisation's future capabilities. It is giving a clear but perhaps unintended message that these staff have no future and from the strength of the feelings expressed during this study, it is also souring the relationship between some staff and their line managers.
- 5.2** Administrative staff in specialist jobs pointed out that the Probation Service recruited them because of their specialist knowledge and skills. However, once in post, they were not supported to attend courses to maintain the currency of that knowledge. This can mean they are trapped both in a job without a career pathway and within the organisation because lack of development impairs their ability to compete externally. Obviously, not developing specialist staff also means a reduction in their value to the organisation. Specialist staff say their training needs are not always identified because their line manager will not always understand the complexity of what they do and how they do it.
- 5.3** Many participants talked about poor supervision arrangements and practice. This included a lack of any supervision policy and implementation guidelines. They described not being supervised for periods of several months followed by supervision that was unco-ordinated and unplanned, resulting in a general discussion that was often not job related. There were often interruptions, no shared notes from supervision and no links between supervision and annual appraisals. Participants were clear that without a coherent supervision policy and

guidelines, there was no formal accountability for managers and other staff within the supervision process. This left an important feature of the job open to abuse and for many staff supervision had become a discredited process.

5.4 Participants described very poor appraisal practices and processes. This sometimes included the lack of a coherent appraisal policy and implementation guidelines. They described not having appraisals for extensive periods, one person for eight years. They described unplanned appraisals, which were sometimes interrupted. For many people, appraisals did not focus enough on what they needed to do in order to apply successfully for promotion, nor did it give consideration to where they would be in three or five years hence and how they might get there. This led to concerns about management accountability and how the service should deal with failure to carry out service policy.

5.5 Participants talked about seeing colleagues being seconded into a position that enhanced their career opportunities. However, this often happened without any knowledge of the vacancy until after the decision had been made. Again, this left them feeling that they are not valued and wondering not just how decisions like these are made, but what they need to do to gain such opportunities.

5.6 Many described how they felt when they saw colleagues getting approval and funding to start formal management training leading to qualifications such as the MBA and the DMS. They were often not clear how such decisions were made and against which criteria. Without this knowledge, it was not possible for them to work towards a time when they could successfully apply for such training.

5.7 Focus group participants said that when they moved from one probation service to another, it was as if they were starting over again and had to prove their competence to cautious or hostile managers. They wanted to see the development of a credible system that would enable them to confirm their capability rather than having to seek opportunities to demonstrate the full range of the skills and knowledge they had built up over many years. The popular view was that a portfolio of competence-based best practice, transferable between probation services, should be developed for use. They also articulated a need for personal development plans produced jointly by the supervisor and supervisee. These personal development plans would consider a) competencies for the current role, b) future competencies for that grade of staff, c) future directions for the individual.

6.0 Career progression

6.1 Many participants said their service did not have person specifications and job descriptions for all posts. Therefore, it was difficult for them to see how shortlisting, interviewing and selection processes could be judged to be objective in the absence of clearly identified and measurable criteria. All focus group participants wanted to see clear person specifications and job descriptions for all posts, used for recruitment and selection. The absence of person

KEY ISSUES FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS AND ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEWS

specifications and job descriptions in some services was also highlighted in HMI's Thematic Inspection 'Towards race Equality'. Without these essential documents it is hard to see how any recruitment process can be objective and fair, or on what basis helpful and consistent feedback can be provided to unsuccessful candidates.

- 6.2** Those in non-operational grades, complained about having no clear career pathway. Many stated that had they known this beforehand they might not have joined the service. They described being inside a 'two tier' system, where operational staff have what seems to be a clear career structure, whilst they do not.
- 6.3** The absence of a clear career pathway creates a real danger of 'plateauing' for staff. 'Plateauing' is a phenomenon affecting experienced managers and staff where they gradually lose their drive, creativity and enthusiasm for the work, often becoming a little cynical. It is important to note that people who have plateaued have lost their sense of organisational or developmental direction, not their commitment. Research at Royal Mail (Zaremba 1994) showed that personnel who plateaued were often familiar with career paths as a concept, but were unclear how they might capitalise on their experiences. Although plateauing can be harmful to both the employee and the organisation there are often simple but effective solutions such as personal career development plans, job shadowing, etc.
- 6.5** Participants described their experience of being in an office when a vacancy becomes available at the next grade up. On many of those occasions, it appears that decisions have been made 'behind closed doors', for someone to act up. As there was no open competition, and no discussion beforehand, this created tension in working relationships and definitely gave a negative message to those who were not approached to act up.
- 6.6** Most of the interviewees gave their career progression a high priority but said that few of their line managers shared this commitment. Although they found this very frustrating, they said they were unwilling to be indefinitely held back by their management or their organisation. 7 of the 18 interviewed told us they were actively exploring external opportunities because they believed they were unlikely to progress internally. Anecdotal information from ABPO and NAAPS suggest that many of their members who leave the Probation Service do so to take up more senior posts elsewhere. It therefore seems likely that some of these highly skilled and well-qualified people will succeed in having their abilities recognised and welcomed elsewhere.

7.1 Set out below is the key learning from a literature review and semi-structured interviews with organisations from the private and public sectors that have a reputation for innovation or good practice in human resource management. This section explores how they recruit, develop and progress their people. More details of the findings can be found at *Appendix 6*.

7.2 There is a great deal written about the retention and progression of minority ethnic staff, with a growing acceptance that a diverse workforce brings creativity and a range of skills to organisations, delivering commercial benefits.

Despite this view research continues to show employment opportunities for minority ethnic staff is still an issue. "People from an ethnic minority are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than white people, and African Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are almost three times as likely. But despite people from ethnic minorities overall being as well qualified as their white counterparts, and some groups being better qualified, white graduates are twice as likely to receive job offers as minority ethnic graduates. Although researchers found no direct evidence of direct discrimination they suggest that cultural and other interpersonal factors might operate to the disadvantage of certain groups"⁵.

7.3 Recognising the symptoms, many public and voluntary sector organisations have begun the journey to achieve a balanced and diverse workforce. Energising this ambition further is a campaign called Race for Opportunity (RfO), set up by Business in the Community in 1995. It is backed by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). In all, 175 leaders of companies and organisations have taken up the challenge of this programme, which sets expectations on employment practice, among a broader set of criteria.

7.4 British Airways, a member of RfO, identified that minority ethnic people were not visible in the recruitment and selection process. "There are now more representative selection panels and minority ethnic personnel are featured in the recruitment literature. Efforts are also made to ensure that minority ethnic cabin crew are sent on school visits to encourage minority ethnic young people to consider BA for a career"⁶

7.5 Littlewoods, the retail group, has also reached out to the community and pioneered an approach to recruit minority ethnic employees. "The normal recruitment path would have involved placing vacancies with the job centre and advertising in the local press. Instead they developed a sort of 'wanted' poster giving details of vacancies for the new store and it was translated into Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu."⁷ The posters were sent to 400 community organisations and local groups. People expressing an interest were sent a job pack, also in the four languages. The selection process itself was the same as all stores use. The result was 25% of people recruited were from a local minority ethnic group. After one-year, staff turnover at the store was only 25% of the average across Littlewoods.

KEY LEARNING FROM THE BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH

Other approaches tried by Littlewoods include:

- delivering leaflets in a range of languages to houses in a high minority ethnic area
- using their Christmas recruitment campaign for temporary staff as a possible pool of future employees
- enlisting the support of Project Fullemploy, a charity aiming to reduce high unemployment rates among minority ethnic groups, to identify good candidates for positions in Littlewoods stores.

7.6 After securing a job, minority ethnic people face an uphill challenge to gain promotion. Part of the emerging picture is the need to build the confidence of minority ethnic staff to take higher positions in organisations. The role of mentoring schemes is highlighted as a vital ingredient in this confidence building process. “The primary focus of mentoring is not on the development of technical competence but on the acquisition of the largely intuitive skills that make people capable of operating effectively at higher degrees of management, or in different situations. Managing directors may be highly competent and confident, but when faced with issues or situations they have never encountered before they realise they need help.”⁸

7.7 The National Mentoring Consortium runs a mentoring scheme “to improve the confidence and self-image of African Caribbean and Asian graduates and helps them overcome the stereotypical image many employers have of them”. Organisations including the BBC, Employment Service, Home Office, HSBC and Ford provide senior management time to mentor undergraduates from ethnic minorities to “jump the chasm between education and employment”. “The results are that 70% of students felt their confidence was boosted, 85% felt their awareness of the career world was enhanced and 92% of mentors and students would recommend the scheme.”

7.8 Ideas from the US on how to promote the recruitment and advancement of diverse employees include:

- offer corporate internships or scholarships
- sponsor job fairs in minority communities
- develop partnerships with minority student professional organisations
- develop partnerships with minority organisations
- tap all known websites where resumes of diverse individuals can be found and
- ask minority employees to provide insight on effective places and ways to recruit diverse candidates.⁹

7.9 The use of personality testing in the selection process has come under scrutiny in recent years. There is some consensus that people from a minority background may be less able to demonstrate their skills through taking a test. Following a successful tribunal case against British Rail, two factors emerged from research undertaken – the lack of understanding about test-administration procedures and candidates not having a developed test-taking approach. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) now recommends training to develop

peoples test-taking skills with more generic skills development in the use of the English language. British Rail commissioned an open-learning pack, which gives tips on good test-taking methods and extensive practice materials to develop language proficiency. One other approach has been to give a dummy version of the tests to candidates to practice on at home. These measures have seen very significant improvements in minority ethnic candidates. The seven British Rail staff re-took the test after using the open-learning pack – five were successful.¹⁰

- 7.10** Further research in the US on personality tests “suggests that the structure of personality is different for African Americans than for other racial and ethnic groups”.¹¹ Although there is no information to compare the findings to the African Caribbean personality, it does pose a question as to the relevance of such tests.

KEY LEARNING FROM THE BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH

RECRUITMENT

8.1 Image

An important factor to emerge in recruitment was the image organisations portray. Research undertaken by Lloyds TSB showed that their image put off minority ethnic candidates from applying to the bank for a career.

- 8.1.2** Lloyds TSB, British Airways, Littlewoods, The NHS Executive and Rank Xerox have taken significant steps to improve their approaches including:
- Making significant changes to advertising literature, showing case studies of minority ethnic graduates.
 - Advertising in the minority ethnic press and targeting new universities which are attended by higher proportions of minority ethnic students. In the case of Lloyds TSB minority ethnic graduates applying jumped from 4% to 16% in 1998 and rose again to 19% in 1999.
 - Using minority ethnic staff in the recruitment and selection process.
 - Worked in partnership with local technical colleges and with local community groups to attract employees from ethnic minorities. In the case of Littlewoods they run open days where people come in and visit the stores and hear a presentation. Promotional information about the company is produced in ethnic languages, as are recruitment adverts, which are placed in specific community newspapers.

8.2 Assessment centres (ACs)

There was strong endorsement for ACs from all organisations which use them. They are considered the most effective selection methodology for minimising bias and conveying fairness to those involved.

- 8.2.1** The BBC has moved wholesale to using ACs in all management recruiting over the last 2/3 years, and believes this has prevented cultural and organisational bias in the selection process. ACs are more expensive in comparison to other selection methods, but the BBC considers them a good investment. This has been evidenced by an increase in the number of minority ethnic candidates being successful.
- 8.2.2** HSBC believes assessment centres deliver a fair approach to selection and minimise potential discrimination on the grounds of race, gender or disability. All assessors are trained to ensure consistent quality and standards. Their graduate recruitment manager attends all centres to assess the assessors and give feedback on their performance. Even if candidates are unsuccessful HSBC wants them to feel they were given a fair chance and view HSBC as a professional organisation.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

9.1 Programmes

One significant investment that an increasing number of organisations are making is in targeted development programmes, where minority ethnic staff apply to get an uplift in their development, build their confidence and take steps to achieve promotion. The best examples are the DfEE and Manchester City Council. For the sake of brevity both are illustrated in full in the '*Organisation interviews*' section.

9.2 Mentoring

The use of mentoring schemes was cited as a key approach to providing powerful development around softer skills. Learning drawn from the programme run by Manchester City Council demonstrated that using Directors as mentors played a critical role in preparing each individual to operate at a more senior level.

9.3 Performance reviews

The importance of quality performance reviews was identified by all the organisations interviewed. The right organisational culture enables performance reviews to be very powerful in their impact and create a dialogue that addresses three key elements:

- the development required to move into a new role within say two years
- enabling the individual to express their aspirations and development needs honestly
- ensuring the line manager can give clear and honest feedback and challenge aspects of poorer performance.

A good example of this is Hewlett Packard whose experience is captured in the '*Organisation Interviews*' section.

9.3.1 The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) also sees the overall quality of a performance review being significantly influenced by the style of the line manager. As in the case of Hewlett Packard, it sees creating the right atmosphere and a sense of trust as a critical. It operates a performance review process (for appraisals and 1:1s) which uses competencies, which staff have indicated they favour because it is more objective.

9.3.2 The DfEE is introducing an independent appeals process to support the performance review system. This will allow employees, who feel their performance review is not fair, to request a third party assessor to examine their review. This is seen as creating a review process which is objective and which makes all line managers accountable. The DfEE is clear that it must set expectations about the quality of the process and provide training and development to line managers to assist in this. In doing so it hopes to progressively grow an open culture where all staff feel they are managed fairly.

KEY LEARNING FROM THE BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH

9.4 Minority ethnic networks

These groups provide support, explore development needs, challenge own attitudes and influence the employing organisations on issues relating to ethnic minorities. BT is the role model with a very strong and established network – see '*Organisation interviews*' below.

10.0 Career progression

10.1 Assessment centres

As in the case of recruitment ACs are increasingly seen as the fairest selection approach for promotion, limiting the possibility of subjectivity and bias to a minimum. Organisations endorsing this approach include the BBC, DfEE, Middlesex Probation Service, Littlewoods and the NHS Executive.

- 10.1.1** Middlesex Probation Service has introduced assessment centres to select candidates for promotion. The emphasis is on competency based assessment through exercises tailored to the future job. Job competencies are lifted directly from the Management Standards.

Over six months nine assessment centres have been run, with around 38 people applying for 17 posts. Feedback from candidates indicates that the assessment centres have provided an objective and fair process. Confidence in the approach has grown, resulting in the interview being reduced from one hour to half an hour, with the removal of the presentation. Committee members have indicated that they have confidence in the assessment centres and are willing to consider removing the selection interview altogether from the promotion process.

10.2 Database of skills.

Having performance review data on all people means organisations can identify that they have suitable candidates for emerging jobs, ensuring eligible minority ethnic candidates do not miss the selection process. Organisations using this approach include Centrica and HSBC.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

- 11.1** This study looks at the recruitment, retention and career progression of the Probation Services' minority ethnic staff. It was not our brief to address service delivery to community, offenders or sentencers and we have not done so. However, it is clear to us that a strong link exists between the two, and the attitude demonstrated towards minority ethnic staff in the Probation Service must inevitably manifest itself in the service provided to minority ethnic offenders and their communities. If an organisation does not understand the experiences and needs of its own personnel, how is it to understand the experiences and needs of its customers with whom it is likely to have far less contact?

"When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary."

"History shows that it does not matter who is in power....those who have not learned to do for themselves and have to depend solely on others never obtain anymore rights or privileges in the end than they had in the beginning"

Dr Carter Goodwin Woodson
African-American historian and educator (1933)

- 11.2** This study shows that the career progression of minority ethnic staff is being constrained by their experiences in the Probation Service. The experiences and views shared by those who took part show they genuinely believe that management are neither encouraging nor supportive of their aspirations. They also believe that management will often not support them when they are badly treated by offenders, partnership organisations or colleagues. Many of these minority ethnic staff have in the words of Dr Woodson, "learned to do for themselves" and some of these have left to work elsewhere. Whilst this might be a source of sadness and disappointment for minority ethnic staff, it is a tragedy for the Probation Service and its image in minority ethnic communities around this country. At a time of turbulence and change the Probation Service can ill afford to lose talented and capable personnel. It can also ill afford to demoralise and alienate those minority ethnic staff who remain and on whom it must rely for increased productivity when the service is being asked to provide more with less resources.
- 11.3** In 1991 the ACOP anti racism committee highlighted the need for positive action to bring minority ethnic staff into middle management and chief officer posts. The response from chief officers was that a chain reaction would occur naturally once the numbers of minority

ethnic staff in the service reached a critical mass. The tables on pages 9 & 10 show that nearly a decade later, minority ethnic staff continue to be under-represented in the management grades. ABPO and NAAPS continue to highlight the frustrated ambitions of their members to become middle and senior managers yet, Probation statistics show that minority ethnic staff in the Probation Service are now proportionate to their numbers in the general population. When the statistics and the experience of ABPO and NAAPS members are viewed alongside the recent success of Derbyshire, Middlesex and the West Midlands Probation Services (amongst others) in recruiting minority ethnic middle managers, we see there is no shortage of high calibre applicants. It therefore seems clear that the reasons for the under-representation of minority ethnic staff in probation management grades must lie elsewhere.

11.4 The minority ethnic staff who participated in this study believe their under-representation in the management grades is the result of poor selection practices, bias and inadequate management attention to staff development. Their experiences have eroded their confidence in the service's selectors and selection processes and as a result, many do not apply (or re-apply) for the advancement they desire. They explain that this is because the effort involved is considerable, the probability of success (based on personal experience and the experience of their peers) is insignificant and the emotional recoil of failure without any clear understanding of the cause is shattering. There is a growing number whose disillusionment is so strong that they are actively seeking alternative careers in other organisations. ABPO and NAAPS confirm a steady trickle of members who have found success elsewhere. Many of the participants who succeeded in progressing their career within the Service describe feeling undermined by malicious gossip, at times explicitly expressed, that they had secured promotion because of their race. We know from the ABPO managers group that this is not an uncommon occurrence. The impact of these malicious whispers should not be underestimated as we have been told they have profoundly influenced the decision of other minority ethnic staff not to apply for promotion. Despite the prevalence of these rumours we are unaware of one example where a Probation Service has publicly responded by condemning them, presenting evidence to contradict them or pointing out their effects on minority ethnic staff.

11.5 In the Probation Service culture minority ethnic staff feel they cannot openly discuss and pursue their career ambitions. Most of those interviewed had fallen into a pattern where they accepted this as a norm that was unlikely to change. One result of this phenomenon is that the organisation is unable to harness the ambitions and potential of its staff in a way that is beneficial to both.

Despite their often significant qualifications, minority ethnic managers had very limited expectations and hopes for the support, development and championing necessary to advance their careers. The desire to have their contributions and achievements acknowledged, appreciated and valued was virtually unanimous and most expressed a commitment to pursue their careers either in or outside the Probation Service.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.6** We detected no real differences between Asian and African Caribbean participants in the issues they raised or the experiences they shared. In fact, there was a strong similarity of views and experiences. The few differences noted amongst participants were more reflective of grade: no more development for senior managers (you've arrived!); no career pathway or at best, very limited career opportunities for admin staff.
- 11.7** The consistency of the feelings and experiences expressed by participants leads us to suggest that they are probably representative of the feelings and experiences of most minority ethnic staff in the Probation Service. We are also quite conscious that many of the concerns we heard about the recruitment process and career development are likely to be echoed by many white managers and staff. However, whilst it is true that good race equality practice is likely to benefit everyone, the potential impact on minority ethnic staff is likely to be greater because of their relative isolation within the service.
- 11.8** Initiatives in the Probation Service based solely on race have rarely stood the test of time. In the main, they have fallen by the way side when the person championing them has moved on, or they have been replaced by another 'flavour of the month'. We think it is necessary to break this cycle because improving conditions and opportunities for one group improves them for all, for instance, good practice on recruitment and career development for minority ethnic staff is good practice for white staff. We would therefore like to see good practice initiatives on race given the status of policy with clear guidelines, monitoring and reviews.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE & DIVERSITY

12.1 Staff attitude and organisational culture are intrinsically linked. Attitude is said to be composed of a cognitive (belief) and a behavioural (action) component. Organisational culture is said to consist of three distinct levels, **surface knowledge** refers to the more tangible aspects of culture such as dress and communication; **daily enactment** refers to the way that people relate to each other through language and behaviour; **basic assumptions** incorporates the less tangible aspects of culture-like belief systems, how people should be treated and tasks actioned.

12.2 When we discuss the Probation Service and race we see a dissonance or tension between the service's beliefs about the worth, rights and nature of individuals, and the actual behaviour of staff at all levels, often experienced as unsupportive and intolerant by this study's participants. Clearly the dissonance between belief and behaviour, and the behaviour itself impact in different ways upon the actor and the recipient.

In focusing on the recruitment, retention and progression of minority ethnic staff this study is primarily concerned with the aspects of the organisation's culture and staff behaviour that inhibit the success of minority ethnic staff. However, we are aware that the dissonance mentioned above must also impact negatively upon white staff who through action or inaction participate in behaviour that is at odds with their beliefs and values. We think that exploration of this new dimension could provide insights and understanding that might assist the service in its expressed desire to properly embrace and value diversity.

12.3 The consultants who conducted this study also experienced a cross section of behaviours and responses from the service's chief officers. The vast majority of those who responded to our requests for assistance (less than 50% of Services) were courteous, helpful and facilitative. They used a range of mechanisms to inform staff and encourage participation. These included identifying lead senior managers, discussions at management meetings and timely emails to all staff and managers explicitly expressing support for the study. Many of these chief officers were flexible and responsive when planned meetings needed to be rescheduled because of poor attendance.

12.4 On the other hand, there was a handful of services who responded negatively or casually to the request for assistance or to the researchers. These included chief officers who publicly criticised the consultants for ineptness in establishing "ridiculous timescales" and "their inability to organise anything". There were also chief officers who said they needed three months notice in order to participate and one Service where the request was scheduled for discussion three weeks later at a management meeting. The decision was subsequently made that there was insufficient time to respond.

Many Services with minority ethnic staff did not respond at all, nor did they inform their

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

staff about the study. Staff from some of these areas expressed their anger to us that they had heard about the study from colleagues in neighbouring services and not from their own chief officers. One probation officer gave an example of information only being shared with him by his service, a few days before a focus group in mid June, during phase two of the process. We are also aware that one black staff group wrote to their CPO querying why they had not been informed, and pointing out that their diaries and commitments were normally planned at a local and not service level.

- 12.5** Equal opportunities has improved the inflow of African/Caribbean and Asian staff into the Probation Service, but it has done little to assist them to achieve their career potential. Trevor Hall (currently race advisor to the Home Secretary) addressing ACOP in 1991 told chief officers that organisations are self-perpetuating, and they do this by recruiting staff in the image of those in power. One way to break this pattern is for all staff to develop a real understanding and appreciation of the benefits of a diverse workforce, the advantages of having diversity in management and specialist posts and the disadvantages of relying predominantly on white, English, male, perspectives.
- 12.6** Behavioural psychologists Lawler and Porter say that staff are motivated to release energy at work as a result of rewards which they value and the probability that their performance will lead to the achievement of that reward. The small number of minority ethnic chief officers in the Probation Service is sending a clear message that for minority ethnic staff, high performance is unlikely to lead to this particular reward. When this is coupled with the abusive behaviour they sometimes face from colleagues and service users (see HMI's thematic inspection on race), the likely result is that minority ethnic staff in the work environment are unlikely to be performing creatively or at their best. The Probation Service must fully embrace the concept of diversity if it is to successfully tap the discretionary contribution of minority ethnic workers.
- 12.7** One key aspect of diversity is culture and Hofstede (1991), explaining why it is increasingly important for managers to understand national cultures and adopt an international approach, offers a conceptual framework for understanding national cultural differences (*Appendix 7*). He also explores the implications for managing in cross-cultural situations.

Recommendations

1. The Probation Service should build on its equal opportunities foundation by fully embracing the concept of diversity. Chief officers should commission training to raise awareness and appreciation of the benefits of diversity. *We endorse recommendation 6 of the Home Office report 'Developing Minority Ethnic Representation in the Probation Service' that calls for a review of current approaches to training on race issue*

2. All those involved in the staff selection process should attend diversity training that enable them to appreciate that 'difference' can carry many positive benefits in:

- problem solving
- the development of best practice
- service to the community
- the management of the service.

We also endorse recommendation 12 of the HMIP's Thematic Inspection Report 'Towards Race Equality' that identifies a training need for Probation Committee Members and white managers who supervise minority ethnic staff.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECRUITMENT

- 13.1** The Probation Service is failing to develop the potential of its minority ethnic staff and it is clear that all too often, those who succeed in developing themselves, find that they are unable to advance their careers beyond a 'glass ceiling' that mysteriously but effectively inhibits their progress.
- 13.2** Selection of the future managers and leaders of the Probation Service based on a forty minute interview is no longer reasonable. This traditional selection technique is highly subjective and unlikely to significantly affect the diversity profile of the Probation Service. We need to move away from a position where selectors can freely base their decisions on their perception of how the ideal candidate 'looks, sound and feels'. The current process does not have the capability to test performance, judgement or decision making and therefore does not enable candidates to demonstrate their abilities or weaknesses.
- 13.3** The best practice section shows that many organisations are now using assessment centres because they provide a good mechanism for assessing the performance of applicants against the requirements of the job description and the competences in the person specification. Assessment centres use a variety of techniques that allow candidates to feel that they are involved in the process with the assessors, unlike the interview where most people have feelings of powerlessness and of being controlled. As a result, successful and unsuccessful candidates are more likely to be impressed with the proceedings and be able to relate their experiences to the structured feedback.
- Middlesex Probation Service has begun to use assessment centres (see *Organisation interviews*). They have agreed to run three days of assessment centres for chief officer grades who wish to see assessment centres in action.
- 13.4** Most recruitment programmes in the Probation Service are designed and operated by chief officer grades and administered by personnel. The vast majority of these chief officers have received either no training or a two or three day introduction to fair selection techniques. Rigorous and fair staff selection programmes should be designed and run by people who have been well trained and have a sound understanding of the strengths and limitations of the mechanisms and evaluative techniques used. This is quite properly the province of the human resources or personnel department. However, it should not be assumed that these skills currently exist in all or even most human resources or personnel teams, for like other areas of expertise, practice evolves and regular refresher or developmental training is essential.
- 13.5** Many minority ethnic staff do not apply for prestigious jobs, secondments, or promotion because they have no understanding of or confidence in the selection process. Similarly, they feel excluded from acting up opportunities where the selection process seems even more mysterious. When selection processes lack transparency, negative experiences and organisational legends often work together to create suspicion and undermine what may

well be sound processes. In the end, this can work to the detriment of both the individual and the organisation.

Recommendations

3. All Probation Services should introduce the use of assessment centres for the appointment of staff. The National Probation Service should issue clear policy and guidelines for the operation of these assessment centres to ensure consistency and content that is reflective of a multi-cultural society.

4. All Probation Services should involve appropriately trained personnel staff in recruitment, selection, and feedback to manage the processes and facilitate consistency and hands-on development for other assessment centre staff. Procedures must be established which include ethnic data collection of successful and unsuccessful candidates at the application and selection stages. Exit interviews should also be carried out with the involvement of personnel, to understand why staff leave the service. The results of this data collection should be shared at least annually with all staff.

5. Appointments by local probation boards of staff below Chief Probation Officer level, should be phased out as soon as possible and be dealt with by operational line managers and personnel officers, working to criteria mentioned above.

6. All Probation Services should develop job descriptions and person specifications for all posts to be used in the appointment of all staff. These documents should clearly set out the criteria that will be used in the shortlisting, interviewing and selection processes.

7. All Probation Services should have a written acting-up policy with supporting guidelines for implementation to ensure that the process is open and transparent to all staff.

8. All Probation Services should have a written secondments policy, with supporting guidelines for implementation, making the process transparent to all staff.

9. All Probation Services should clearly set out and publicise their career structure for operational and administrative staff and provide opportunities for these staff to develop crossover skills. This will assist staff to plan their own development and reduce the potential for plateauing.

We endorse recommendation 3 of the Thematic Inspection Report 'Towards Race Equality' and recommendation 4 of the report 'Developing Minority Ethnic Representation in the Probation Service' that calls on the HO to review the model framework for the recruitment and selection of trainee PO's and the issuing of guidelines to all services on the recruitment and selection of staff.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

STAFF DEVELOPMENT & CAREER PROGRESSION = RETENTION

- 14.1** Staff development is a systematic process for ensuring that an organisation has the effective personnel it requires to satisfy present and future needs. It is concerned with improving the performance of existing staff, giving them opportunities for growth and development, and ensuring, so far as possible, that management succession within the organisation is provided for.

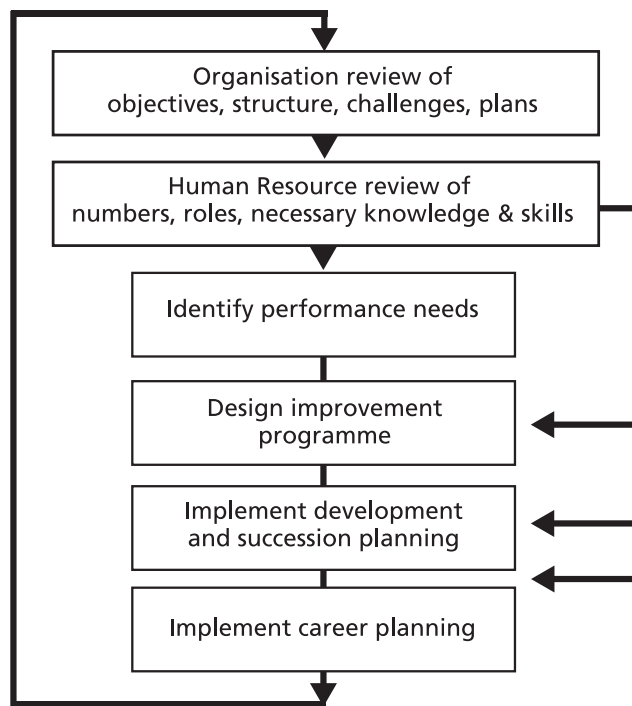
The objectives of an effective staff development programme are to improve the overall performance (financial, operational and human) of the organisation and ensure its long-term growth.

- 14.2** Many organisations use development centres to evaluate and develop the capability of their staff (see *best practice research*, also *organisation interviews*, Appendix 6). We are aware that this is currently being considered in parts of the Probation Service and we would like to support this initiative. We think there should be development centres for all staff, but we recognise that on its own, this would not enable minority ethnic staff to progress beyond 'the glass ceiling' that currently inhibits their progress. This requires other action (see *culture, diversity and recruitment*).

We suggest that once development centres are established services should be held accountable for ensuring the attendance of a reasonable proportion of their minority ethnic staff. In addition, the Home Office Probation Unit should make additional funds available for the sole use of minority staff attendance. The aim would be to increase the numbers of minority ethnic staff who are able to compete equally in future selection events, without reducing the numbers of white staff attending development centres because of funding.

- 14.3** The minority ethnic managers who participated in this study talked about how they received a full workload on day one of their promotion but of having to wait for up to a year for management training. This left them relying on their experience as a practitioner or practice teacher to deal with significant managerial issues. They also described the additional pressure of being asked to take a lead or representative role on race issues whilst getting to grips with the new job. Whilst many were happy to do so, they were unhappy that they were expected to do it in addition to all their other managerial duties without appropriate workload relief.
- 14.4** If we are to improve the development and progression of minority ethnic staff in the Probation Service it is essential that we use a systematic review and planning process that is understood by everyone, and that can be implemented consistently across the country. This development process should be used for all staff. It should be located in the Service's staffing policies and procedures and not under race and equal opportunities policies.

Suggested Process



The process for staff and management development.
Adapted from Armstrong (1994)

- 14.5** The staff and management development process should be an integral component in the organisation's plans and objectives. This is essential if development is to be based on both service and performance needs and attract the support of senior management. Each stage should be firmly linked to what has gone before and what is to come, so that the process becomes cyclical rather than linear.

With **organisation review**, attention is focused on both the current and future picture of the organisation. The aim is to review the operation of the organisation, the management of current challenges, and assess the capacity of staff and management to meet future challenges.

The **human resource** analysis places staff and managerial resources and future requirements in the context of data generated by the organisation review.

Performance needs identifies staff and management developmental needs based on the analyses of future requirements.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Improvement programmes ensure that both staff and managers achieve at least the necessary competences for their roles and tasks. Good improvement programmes will stretch the individual beyond the required competences in an effort to achieve his or her full potential.

Development planning (6 – 18 months) aims to ensure that development is timely and that implementation plans for the transfer of learning to the workplace are developed and implemented in good time. Succession planning aims to ensure an adequate supply of trained and capable staff and managers will be available to fill future vacancies or to take up new positions created by change or growth.

Career planning (18 – 36 months) aims first to ensure that staff have the guidance, support and assistance to achieve their potential, and that they are continually developed in order to meet new personal and organisational challenges. Secondly, that staff with the potential to progress within the organisation are provided with the experiences that will equip them for whatever level of responsibility they have the ability to reach.

Recommendations

10. All staff in the Probation Service should have a written personal development plan, jointly developed and driven by the individual and their line manager. The plan should have three sections, 1) Development plans identified by senior management. These would address the future competences for that grade of staff. 2) Improvement plans identified by the line manager for the competences relating to the current role. These should be based on the individuals potential capabilities and not solely on the perceived 'norm' for that grade. 3) Improvement and development plans identified by the individual. Improvement plans should address the competences for the current role while development plans should focus on possible future roles.

11. We strongly encourage the National Probation Service to introduce regional 'development centres' for staff who wish to progress their careers. Centres should provide development for minority ethnic and white staff and the curriculum should reflect the management needs of a multi-national, multi-racial and multi-cultural organisation. On their own, such centres are unlikely to be able to address all the needs of minority ethnic staff, so we recommend that participation in development centre programmes should be co-ordinated with mentoring and learning set initiatives.

Once development centres are established, services should be held accountable for ensuring the attendance of a reasonable proportion of their minority ethnic staff. The Home Office Probation Unit should also, for a period of between three and five years, make funds available for the attendance of additional minority ethnic staff.

We support the principle of recommendation 19 of the report 'Developing Minority Ethnic Representation in the Probation Service' to establish a pilot career assessment centre for minority ethnic staff, but strongly suggest that the focus of that recommendation should be widened to include all staff.

12. We recommend that newly promoted managers should have a six – nine month development window immediately following appointment. During this time the new managers should focus on developing the competences necessary for their new role. This means that every new manager and their line manager should agree a development plan immediately upon appointment, and that resources should be available to meet their training needs immediately, when they most need it. During this development window, new managers should not be asked to participate in tasks or duties not immediately relevant to their support, development or the management of their team.

13. All Probation Services should have personal portfolios for all staff containing evidence of their personal development and best practice history. These should be continually developed and be transferable between services. The portfolio should be the property of the individual but the responsibility for its development should be shared between the individual and their line manager.

14. All Probation Services should have a clear policy, with supporting guidelines for implementation, about how resources for formal management training, which leads to qualifications such as the MBA and the DMS, will be allocated, in order that the process becomes more transparent to all staff.

15. The National Probation Service should ensure that local Probation Services have a written supervision policy, supported by clear guidelines for implementation. This policy must, at a minimum, take into account matters such as race and gender supervision issues, frequency of supervision, agenda setting, recording of information, personal development issues, casework and or management issues, sharing of notes, confidentiality, and links between supervision and annual appraisals. The policy and guidelines should be clear about the supervisor and supervisee's accountability for working within the framework.

We endorse recommendation 19 of HMIP's Thematic Report 'Towards Race Equality' which amongst other things calls for the needs of minority ethnic staff to be addressed in supervision

16. All Probation Services should review and amend their policy for annual appraisals. Necessary amendments should include:

- requirement to detail the 'competency milestones' necessary for advancement to the next grade for anyone expressing an interest in future promotion. This requirement should not be dependent on length of service.
- a three-year plan for each employee that addresses issues such as mentoring and shadowing
- the mechanism for transferable appraisals between Probation Services
- accountability for the appraiser and the appraisee to work within the framework.

*We endorse recommendation 4 of the report 'Towards Race Equality' **which calls for a review of the appraisal framework***

15 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

END NOTE

- 15.1** In closing we think it important to restate that the needs of minority ethnic staff for support, development and career progression are basic needs and should not be seen as a request for special treatment. These needs were outlined by psychologists nearly 50 years ago. Maslow and later organisational psychologists (*Appendix 8*) hypothesised that all employees have a need for physical and psychological safety, friendship, teamwork, self worth, value, recognition from peers and managers, challenge and responsibility at work. Failure to satisfy these needs will impact on the individuals well being at work and ultimately affect their performance
- 15.2** The message for probation managers is abundantly clear: inaction is equal to action in its consequences. By taking no action to challenge unacceptable behaviour nor providing support for the victims, managers are essentially condoning racism and leaving minority ethnic staff to believe that they are unimportant

If racist behaviour in an organisation is unchallenged the victim is given a clear message 'you do not belong'. When this happens to minority ethnic managers who have authority, the message is experienced as 'you do not belong and you are unimportant'. Should these messages be coupled with a lack of interest in the person's future the message becomes 'you do not belong, you are unimportant and you have no future here'

Dear ABPO, NAAPS, ACOP, CPC

4th April 2000

Re. Study into the retention and career progression
of African Caribbean and Asian staff

Our consultancy has been commissioned by the Home Office to complete the study identified in recommendation 18 of the report '*Developing Minority Ethnic Representation in Probation Services*'. We are therefore writing to you to introduce ourselves and request your assistance in what is clearly an important piece of work for the Probation Service.

GLM is a small consultancy with two principles and 8 consultants and trainers. We carry expertise in organisation development, change management, diversity management, black staff development, equal opportunities and management development in public and private sectors (manufacturing, telecommunications, criminal justice and local authorities). Our background and experience have resulted in a deep understanding of human behaviour and the type of leadership necessary to gain compliance and support for transformation programmes.

The consultants involved in this study are myself Conroy Grizzle (project leader) formerly ACPO in Avon, Glen Gocoul (leading the focus groups) a senior manager in Social Services, and Sarah Anderton (leading the search for Best Practice) formerly personnel manager Sainsbury's and EO Officer Gloucestershire County Council. It is likely that one of us may contact you or a member of your organisation at some time over the coming months to request information or assistance on a particular matter.

Our study has four main sections

1. Focus Groups. Specifically for:



2. Consultation with key groups i.e. ABPO, NAAPS, ACOP, CPC, HMI etc.

LETTER TO KEY GROUPS

3. One to one qualitative interviews with African Caribbean and Asian experienced practitioners, experienced administrative staff, newly promoted middle managers, experienced managers, experienced administrative managers and ACPO's in post and those no longer working for the service.

4. Search for Best Practice in the Public and Private Sectors.

The search for Best Practice and the consultation with key groups has already begun. However, we need considerable assistance from you and your members in order to progress the focus groups and one to one qualitative interviews. We would be grateful if you would ask your members to assist us by:

- Enabling relevant members of staff to attend the focus groups and qualitative interviews. The focus groups will have two phases. Phase one 'gathering information & seeking solutions' will take place in London on the 2nd & 4th May, and in Birmingham on the 5th & 8th May. Phase two 'testing the solutions' will take place in June.
- Identifying and informing us of the name and contact details of staff who fit the focus group profiles above and who will be able to participate in either the focus groups, the one to one interviews or both. For the purposes of the study, newly promoted is defined as less than 9 months and experienced as more than 4 years.
- Identifying and informing us of the name and contact details of African Caribbean & Asian ACPO's in post and those no longer working for the service. Our intention is to include them in the one to one interviews.

Finally, I would like to meet with you and any other appropriate members of your organisation to discuss your organisation's perception of the key issues and their implications for your members and the wider service. It is my intention to contact you by phone within the next few days

Thank you in advance for all your help

Yours Sincerely

Conroy Grizzle

Experienced Practitioners and Administrative Staff.

- What priority do you place on your career progression? Why?
- What practical support and assistance do you get from your line manager to develop yourself and your career?
- How could your supervision be improved?
- When was your last appraisal and how useful was it?
- What do you need to do in order to progress your career?
- Do you think the service has a responsibility to assist you to progress your career? Why?
- What should the service do in order to help you progress your career?
- What additional support do you need as an African/Caribbean or Asian worker?

Newly Promoted Middle Managers

- To what do you attribute your recent promotion?
- What practical support and assistance do you get from your line manager to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for your current responsibilities?
- What priority do you place on your career progression? Why?
- What practical support and assistance do you get from your line manager to develop your career?
- How could your supervision be improved?
- When was your last appraisal and how useful was it?
- What do you need to do in order to progress your career?
- Do you think the service has a responsibility to assist you to progress your career? Why?
- What should the service do in order to help you progress your career?
- What additional support do you need as an African/Caribbean or Asian manager?

Experienced Operational and Administrative Managers

- What priority do you place on your career progression? Why?
- What practical support and assistance do you get from your line manager to develop yourself and your career?
- How could your supervision be improved?
- When was your last appraisal and how useful was it?
- What do you need to do in order to progress your career?
- Do you think the service has a responsibility to assist you to progress your career? Why?
- What should the service do in order to help you progress your career?
- What practical support and assistance do you get from your line manager to develop the knowledge and skills that might be needed by middle managers in the future?
- What additional support do you need as an African/Caribbean or Asian manager?

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Chiefs Who Recently Appointed a Minority Ethnic Manager

- What priority should the Probation Service place on the career progression of minority ethnic staff? Why?
- Do you think the Service has a responsibility to assist minority ethnic staff to progress their career? Why?
- If so, what should the Service do in order to help them progress their career?
- What practical support and assistance should be provided to minority ethnic staff in order to develop them and their career?
- What should minority ethnic staff do in order to progress their own career?
- What additional support do you think should be provided to newly promoted African Caribbean/Asian managers? Why?
- What additional support do you think should be provided to experienced African Caribbean/Asian managers? Why?
- To what do you attribute the recent appointments of African Caribbean and Asian Managers?

1. What priority is placed on your career progression by a) yourself and b) your line manager. Score on a scale of 6 where 1 = low priority and 6 = high priority. Explain the reasons for your scores.

Scoring guide.

1. Never initiates discussion on career development. Only responds. Never pursues the issues discussed
2. Initiates discussion on career development only at appraisal time
3. Raises issue of career development from time to time in an unstructured way
4. Regular structured discussion takes place on career development (in and out of supervision). Action is taken as a result of the discussion
5. There is a written development plan that has been contributed to by both parties and the staff member drives the resulting action
6. There is a written development plan that has been contributed to by both parties. The resulting action is driven by both the staff member and line manager

1. What have **you** done within the past six months to progress your own career?
2. What **practical support and assistance** do you get from your line manager to progress your career?
3. What else needs to be done to progress your career a) by you, and b) by your line manager? Why?
4. What should the service do to progress your career? Why?
5. What additional support do you need as an Asian/Africa/African Caribbean worker or manager? Why?
6. What should be done to develop newly promoted managers? Why?
7. What additional support should be provided for newly promoted Asian/African/African Caribbean managers? Why?

Additional questions for managers on secondment/those who have left the service

8. Why did you leave?
9. What would have made you stay?
10. What would encourage you to return?

APPENDIX 4 | SCALE FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- 1. NEVER INITIATES DISCUSSION ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT. ONLY RESPONDS. NEVER PURSUES THE ISSUES DISCUSSED**
- 2. INITIATES DISCUSSION ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT ONLY AT APPRAISAL TIME**
- 3. RAISES ISSUE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT FROM TIME TO TIME IN AN UNSTRUCTURED WAY**
- 4. REGULAR STRUCTURED DISCUSSION TAKES PLACE ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT (IN AND OUT OF SUPERVISION). ACTION IS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THE DISCUSSION**
- 5. THERE IS A WRITTEN DEVELOPMENT PLAN THAT HAS BEEN CONTRIBUTED TO BY BOTH PARTIES. THE RESULTING ACTION IS DRIVEN BY THE STAFF MEMBER**
- 6. THERE IS A WRITTEN DEVELOPMENT PLAN THAT HAS BEEN CONTRIBUTED TO BY BOTH PARTIES. THE RESULTING ACTION IS DRIVEN BY BOTH THE STAFF MEMBER AND LINE MANAGER**

Interviews with current personnel including managers on secondment and those no longer working for the service

We conducted 18 1:1 interviews lasting approximately one hour. The interviewees included:

- 4 operational middle managers titled or with the equivalent title of SPO
- 4 probation officers
- 3 administrative managers including one with a specialist role
- 2 administrative officers
- 5 Assistant Chief Officers (ACPO) or equivalent, including two on secondment and one no longer employed by the service. One of the two on secondment was promoted for the duration of the secondment
- 6 of Asian and 12 of African/African Caribbean origins
- 11 female and 7 male
- Questions asked can be found at Appendix 2

The 1:1 interviews

Overall, the responses were remarkably consistent. Regardless of race, gender, seniority or location the interviewees gave the same messages again and again. Additionally, ACPOs and administrative staff identified issues that were particularly relevant for their roles or seniority.

Priority given to career development

When asked what priority they placed on their career progression using a scale of 6 where 1 = low priority and 6 = high priority (see Appendix 3 for scoring guide) three gave themselves a rating of 5 indicating that they had a jointly agreed, written development plan which they drove. 10 rated themselves 4 indicating they had no written development plan but they raised the topic regularly and in a structured form during supervision. Three rated themselves 3 indicating they raised the matter of their development from time to time in an unstructured way. Two rated themselves 2 indicating that they only raise the issue at appraisal time and one said they never raised the issue of career development with their line manager. They only ever respond when it was raised. Those who rated themselves 4 said they would have scored themselves 6 but the scoring guide only allowed for a score of 4 in the absence of a written development plan.

In contrast, five said their line manager never initiated discussion on career development and never pursued it when it was raised. Six said their line manager initiated discussion only at appraisal time. Three said their line manager raised it from time to time in an unstructured way. Three said there was regular, structured discussion on career development with their line manager, this took place in and out of supervision and the line manager took action on the results of the discussion. One said there was a written development plan that had been contributed to by both parties but that they drove the resulting action. This person thought the line manager only showed an interest because it was the organisation's policy but they

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felt that this process gave them a framework and permission to legitimately address their own career development.

Action taken in the last six months to progress own career

In the past six months the 18 people interviewed had done a lot to progress their career. 12 people had either begun or completed academic study courses including three MBAs, one MA and two BScs. Seven people had actively explored external work opportunities and one had been successful in obtaining a management job in another organisation. This example is bittersweet because this person had asked her line manager for help to develop her skills and career opportunities. The response was negative and she was left feeling that the Service viewed her as unimportant and her skills as too basic to be developed.

Nine people had developed or were actively developing other skills and competences including IT, aromatherapy, group facilitation and strategic planning. The aim is to broaden their repertoire and their attractiveness to potential employers.

Three people had achieved promotion in the last six months and four had enlarged their job in an attempt to make their work more stimulating.

Practical support and assistance from line manager to progress career

Seven out of the 18 interviewees said they get no practical support and assistance to progress their career from their line manager. One of these seven got lots of support in the current job but nothing with development. Another got 'only talk'. One quoted her line manager as saying "I cannot do anything for you".

Three interviewees said they were deliberately exposed to developmental opportunities and two said they had been profiled or championed amongst their line managers' colleagues. One of these said that being championed had helped to balance the public views of one manager who had expressed doubts about him.

Three people had received assistance with applications for jobs and university, two had received affirmation of their skills and abilities when they were feeling low and three said their manager had supported their applications for developmental courses. One line manager had recommended the use of a specialist consultant. Another had agreed to time off for exams and one had offered to pay for careers advice. One person said they had successfully 'squeezed' their manager for a little appreciation.

Necessary action by the individual to progress their career

Eight out of the 18 interviewees expressed their intention to obtain a management, professional or academic qualification in order to increase their portfolio and attractiveness

to potential employers. Six said they needed to make specific career development plans or review their existing plans. Five said they were going to take more responsibility and be more active in promoting or marketing themselves. Three were actively seeking employment external to the Probation Service and two expressed the need for a mentor.

Necessary action by the line manager to progress the individuals career

11 people said their line manager should agree a personal development programme, implement it and review progress on a regular basis. 10 identified the provision of encouragement, practical support and appreciation. Six wanted their line manager to provide opportunities that were stretching and relevant to their learning needs. Six wanted the manager to share the responsibility for matching interests and need with development and training opportunities. Four identified the need for a skills audit in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Three senior managers identified their need for a champion who would promote them and their abilities in the fora to which they had little or no access 'the corridors of power'. Two people wanted their line manager to stop discouraging them, and two thought that if line managers sorted out their own career progression they would be less preoccupied with self and have more attention for their staff.

Necessary action by the organisation to progress the individuals career

Many interviewees made the point that they were an investment and when they succeeded the organisation also succeeded. They pointed out that the organisation's responsibility towards them begins and not ends at appointment.

Eight people believed the organisation should have a clear statement for all staff saying what it is prepared to do to assist them with career development. Development programmes should be monitored and managers should be held accountable for their action or inactivity.

Four wanted time off to complete academic studies and four wanted recognition for their contribution and open acknowledgement of their potential.

The administrative staff pointed out the importance of being helped to develop crossover skills. They pointed out that many administrative personnel have no career pathway in the Probation Service and as many of them are interested in and capable of doing different jobs the organisation should have a responsibility to develop them.

Two people highlighted the need for management training courses to have a black perspective. The argument is that now the service has minority ethnic staff and managers, it should not continue to use courses and course providers that do not reflect the experience of the participants attending those courses.

All the senior managers interviewed believed the Chief Probation Officer or the head of their organisation has a responsibility to champion their minority ethnic senior managers. Their

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experience is that once appointed they were seen to have arrived at their natural position and were not really expected to have a career beyond that point. Their view is supported by the absence of a personal development plan and career development discussions initiated by their line manager or the chief.

What additional support is needed by minority ethnic managers

This question generated four main themes. 10 interviewees identified the need for support from other minority ethnic managers. People with similar experiences that could share their survival and management strategies. It was pointed out that one does not always feel able to take every problem to the line manager. The theme of action learning sets for minority ethnic managers was also suggested as a mechanism for getting both support and development.

Five identified the need for their management to acknowledge the different strengths as well as the additional burdens carried by minority ethnic managers. Four identified the need for external support in the form of a mentor or consultant. Four thought that the best support for minority ethnic managers would be for the service to stop paying lip service to the values underpinning equality of opportunity and diversity.

What should be done to develop newly promoted managers

15 interviewees suggested a comprehensive training programme beginning before joining their team or on the first day and being concluded in the first year. Most people wanted the training to include working with other cultures, conflict resolution and people management. New managers should not be 'thrown into the job', as moving from client to staff supervision was not seen as straightforward.

Five said there should be regular, structured supervision with the managers development and performance as regular features. Five said there should be mentoring or pairing with an experienced 'buddy' for at least the first six months. This would provide another opportunity to check out ideas and talk through experiences. Five highlighted the need for grade transition support groups

Additional support for newly promoted minority ethnic managers

Nine interviewees recommended that newly promoted minority ethnic managers should be encouraged to meet with other minority ethnic managers for support. It was suggested that this would be more likely to happen if the line manager facilitated attendance by ensuring that workload did not get in the way of need and good intentions.

Five suggested that minority ethnic managers should have the option of a minority ethnic buddy or mentor. Five strongly recommended that the line manager should acknowledge the potential for racism and the supervision agenda should provide real (not cursory)

opportunities to discuss how they were being treated by their team or colleagues. There was a recognition that even the strongest minority ethnic manager could begin to feel isolated, unsupported and begin to demonstrate poor judgement and decision making as a result of continued racist behaviour from staff or peers. There was consensus that it can do long term harm to new managers.

Additional questions for ex managers

We were only able to put these additional questions to four people, including three ACO's. As a result, we have not tried to draw any conclusions from so few examples but we think the answers are interesting and add further weight to issues about the recruitment process, career development and career progression.

Why did you leave?

- There was no way forward. I was utterly frustrated by the failure of management to acknowledge my contributions and give credit for some pioneering work
- I am keen to improve myself and my Service did not attempt to help me to do so in any way.
- A reasonable opportunity arose when I was very bored and not being stretched
- Leaving was good for my CV
- Lack of opportunities where I was and the recognition of potential opportunities elsewhere
- I understood that I was not going to be successful in probation in this geographical area

What would have made you stay?

- Only promotion
- If I had truly believed that I would receive genuine encouragement to pursue internal opportunities
- A change of the CPO for whom I had lost all respect
- No appropriate vacancies elsewhere
- A post in the organisation that would have used my skills and abilities and allow me to progress

What would encourage you to return?

- This organisation does not develop its staff and if you are black it is worse. If you are black you can move across but not up. As long as that stays the same I will not come back
- A definite opportunity for a CPO post. I cannot see myself returning as an ACPO
- When the Probation Service decides to see the issue of race as a serious issue for service delivery

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- When the Probation Service is more accountable
- A bigger, broader, more strategic job i.e. promotion

Two of these managers have moved from the Probation Service into broader, more strategic roles with a national brief. The third manager has been promoted for the period of a secondment into a broader, more strategic, national role. The fourth person left the Probation Service for a management post.

BBC

Recruitment

The BBC runs a 20-week mentor project with a West London College to help minority ethnic students to understand the BBC and the range of job opportunities available to them.

Career development

The BBC has initiated discussions in the organisation (targeted at all staff) to recognise the need to tap potential and open up career paths. This has been driven through a mix of using existing development approaches and making some funds available for specific programmes.

The BBC Broadcast Mentoring and Development Scheme provides minority ethnic staff with the opportunity to have work-based projects, personal development seminars on how the BBC works and regular meetings with senior management mentors. It has created a great dialogue where senior managers use their influence to support the individual.

Minority ethnic employees can apply for additional personal development and training. However, places are limited and selection is through a competency assessment.

The BBC uses an individual performance framework based on whole job performance, rather than just tasks, to measure competencies and delivery against objectives. This supports discussions about moving roles or adapting their skills to changes in technology, which so often have an impact on jobs in the BBC, for example the move to digital broadcasting. They believe the review enables the discussion to be focused around the persons potential and opportunities, rather than around the existing role.

Contact: Linda Mitchell 020 8576 9431

BT

Career development – Minority ethnic Network

BT has a network for people from a diversity background with 9,000 members. It is organised and run voluntarily by BT people and has a board director providing senior support, which ensures “diversity”, is a board meeting agenda item. Jenny Duncan, who chairs the network, believes senior support was vital to get the network off the ground and established. “It does not have to be someone from a minority background, but they must be passionate about it in order to build confidence that it can make a difference.”

The network has won external awards for its work, most recently the British Diversity Awards, recognising achievements for creating interaction with its members.

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The network has eight committee members, each taking responsibility for work packages including:

- **Research** – The network runs regular focus groups exploring members experiences, issues and solutions around their development and career within the company. They also contribute to BT employee research including focus groups and the annual staff survey (CARE).
- **Mentoring** – The network manages it's own mentoring programme and has 80 matched pairs. The mentoring relationship is agreed between the two individuals. There is also a BT mentoring scheme open to members, although preference among members is for the network scheme as it helps the exploration of issues of ethnicity.
- **Communications** – Quarterly newsletter with a distribution of 5,000.
- **Intranet** – A self-managed site providing on-line registration and information.
- **Conference** – Annual event bringing members together. Last two held at Olympia and the NEC.
- **Marketing** – Promote the network to new members by running open days and giving presentations around the UK.
- They have contributed to Race for Opportunity campaign and given advice to Civil Service Departments about setting up and running their own networks.
- **Project Management** – To manage all the network activities using robust methods, role modelling 'best practice'.
- **Workshops** – Regular local network meetings create the opportunity for dialogue and exploration. These self-support sessions enable members to explore their individual potential and act as sounding boards for one another. In many ways these are seen as an extension to mentoring. The leaders of the network also believe these sessions are key because they encourage members to challenge their own attitudes, inhibitions and develop more confidence and self belief to achieve their full potential.

The network also organises development workshops including cultural awareness, interview skills, presentation skills, influencing skills, assertiveness and communication. The cultural awareness sessions are open to everyone. Newly appointed line managers are invited to attend (supported by BT) and the numbers attending are growing.

The committee members are important role models, helping to challenge stereotypes held by members, of what minority ethnic people can achieve i.e. the self-perceptions of members. BT has launched a 'diversity award' which is also helping to raise the profile of excellence within the minority ethnic community in the company.

Contact: Jenny Duncan 020 7829 3623

Centrica (includes British Gas and the AA)

Recruitment

When creating a new role in the organisation a job description and person specification are automatically developed for it. Because job rationalisation is taking place in Centrica few roles are advertised externally and the focus is on internal applications. Applications include a section for recording ethnic background, which is removed by HR before they undertake the initial sift with the recruiting line manager. The benefit being that the line managers focus on the role rather than the candidates' background. The person specification helps generate a dialogue to identify what skills and experience the ideal candidate would have, rather than focusing on personality. Centrica feels it has helped ensure appropriate candidates are getting through to interview, which is jointly undertaken by the line manager and HR.

Approximately 12 graduates are recruited to join the Graduate Development Programme. For both graduates and the few externally advertised jobs, Centrica has placed adverts in newspapers and journals with a high minority ethnic readership. In the same way they have targeted colleges with higher minority ethnic numbers to try to attract more applicants from this area of the population.

In the short-listing process the ethnic origin data is removed by HR prior to the first sift. Care is taken to ensure a balanced pool of candidates from all backgrounds. Successful candidates go on to attend a one-day assessment centre, where various group exercises are undertaken to explore their personal impact and ability to work with others. The assessment team holds a review to agree which candidates will be offered a job, which require further consideration and which will not get an offer. Later the same day candidates are given specific feedback on their performance, aiding the transparency of the process.

Career development

Secondments and sideways moves are encouraged to build experience and skills. This is formally prompted during individual annual performance reviews. The review process encourages both the line manager and individual to consider the longer term and what role could potentially be appropriate. The individual is encouraged to suggest their own development needs for their current and future roles.

Career progression

Centrica has a database (currently being redeveloped to include people from British Gas and the AA) containing information about peoples' skill sets and performance. It is used to identify people across the organisation that may be ready or appropriate to apply for a higher role. It is regarded as a good approach to prevent line managers "earmarking" people for roles, and ensures all suitable candidates are considered. It is deemed to provide a

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more open approach, aided by a supportive culture, which they feel they have. The selection process is a joint interview by HR and the line manager, focusing on the requirements of the job description and person specification.

Contact: Sarah Bayliss 01753 758427

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)

Career development

The Equal Chance Programme (ECP) is a development programme (described as a micro initiative) which began three/four years ago and offers a limited number of places for minority ethnic employees in administrative and executive grades. Successful candidates are able to benefit from a fund to purchase training and development for themselves.

The programme does not get people promoted, but provides access to development activities which prepare participants and provide them with skills before applying for more senior positions. Entry to the programme is through a rigorous competency based application process. First there is an interview board where they make a presentation to demonstrate a personal competency e.g. managing and leading a small team. It does not have to be based on the work environment and can be about any facet of the candidates' life e.g. running a scouts group, organising events, being a school governor etc. The DfEE observed that focusing the presentation on a work scenario was unhelpful as candidates, who have potential, may not have experience in the work context that demonstrates the competence.

The programme is promoted through a series of two-hour site presentations held in Sheffield, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham and three in London. Other media such as publications is also used. DfEE board directors and directors from the Employment Service present at the events, giving very positive messages to show their support and explain why the programme is important. This senior sponsorship was vital to re-launch the programme, after applications had fallen back. The next element of the presentation is from an external consultancy, which supports the running of the programme, to explain the entry criteria. This is followed by presentations from previous participants giving their personal insight about what they have gained and why it is so valuable. There is a session for questions and answers which concludes the presentations. Feedback from the events has indicated they are very informative and well located to enable attendance.

Successful candidates are telephoned by a senior manager and congratulated. They give their personal support, which includes the offer to call them if they experience any obstacles on the programme.

There is a two-day induction event. Each participant's line manager attends for half a day to understand his or her role, to hear a director explain the importance of the scheme and

that it is not optional. The line manager is included as a result of learning from dropout rates in the early days. It also reflects the need to ensure that their practical issues also need to be addressed (and attitudes on occasion) for them to release their people for the development activities. This kind of dialogue helps identify solutions, for example the Employment Service now has back-fill arrangements to staff-up offices when participants are receiving training. A help line number is available for line managers if they need advice or guidance at any stage throughout ECP.

The induction sessions also include participants who are concluding the previous year's scheme. The evening is set aside for sharing and networking. This also results in mentoring relationships being set up, with a formal expectation that previous participants are available to mentor new starters.

The induction event has sessions to explore what is holding people back in their careers and line managers are actively engaged to consider their role in supporting and helping the individual to get the most out of the programme. Personal circumstances can also be considered and there was an example of a woman being given financial support with childcare to enable her to attend training. Aspirations and competencies are drawn out of the group and individuals receive a 1:1 to explore their development needs and to begin to construct their personal development plan for the coming year. The trainers use this input to identify common areas of development need, which often results in training events being developed and delivered for the group as a whole, leveraging economies of scale. Examples include interview skills, presentation skills, CV writing, IT skills, assertiveness and influencing skills.

Once the initial development plan is constructed a meeting with the line manager is organised to get their buy-in and input.

The DfEE has a very strong Minority Ethnic Advisory Group, which forms a support network across the UK. They have been involved in ECP and act as co-ordinators making contact every two months with the individual and line manager. This has been a very valuable strategy to maintain momentum and has also helped to position the programme as 'business as usual'. They are also able to leverage their role to identify secondments and industrial placements etc.

During ECP there are two additional events bringing participants together to review progress. These are again attended by senior managers who hear about what has been achieved and are available to assist with the removal of obstacles, if any have arisen.

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Some statistics:

Year	Applications	People placed	Promoted during programme
97/98	96	25	8
98/99	67	25	11
99/01	53	28	8
00/01	111	36	2 to date

At present the DfEE has no tracking method to formally monitor people once they leave ECP. Informal feedback indicates there have been additional promotions achieved to those above. Feedback from participants at the end of the programme has indicated that they do not believe they would have been promoted if they had not attended ECP.

The Home Office, DTI, ACAS and DSS have replicated ECP.

Career progression

All vacancies are advertised and based on competencies in the job description and person specification. The use of these is seen as key to creating fairness in the selection process. Line managers are asked to endorse applications for promotion, using specific evidence from performance reviews.

The assessment process is conducted by interview and involves the line manager, HR and an independent assessor. These three meet to sift applications and remind themselves of the competencies they are looking for. Internally up to three performance reports may be used to support this process (see career development). Feedback is given for those who are not short-listed for the interview or do not succeed at interview. The interviews themselves are an exploration of competencies and seek examples that endorse the information in the performance reviews.

For senior management posts assessment centres are used with psychometrics. These are considered to have created fairness through the use of competence based exercises. People are observed in groups and are given specific feedback during the running of the centre.

Contact: Kevin Falkner 0114 259 7054

Hewlett Packard (HP)

At the heart of Hewlett Packard is a values system called the 'HP Way' that demands that people, "respect and listen to each other". In their view this cannot be underestimated for setting the tone and style in which people work together and are managed.

Recruitment

HP tends to promote from within. Where a role is advertised externally HR work with the recruiting manager to develop the job description and person specification. In doing so consideration is given to ensure there is no bias and the focus is on the job requirements. The sifting process is again jointly undertaken.

Candidates are invited for interview and the number of interviewers will depend on the role – typically two people. Interviewers assess candidates against clearly agreed job criteria and use the same criteria to select the successful candidate. Unsuccessful candidates are given constructive feedback, although not on the same day.

Career development

The performance management system is viewed as critical and is reinforced by widespread targeted communication, with training for managers and new recruits. New starters are also given 'buddies' in their host team. The focus for driving development is with the employee and time is set aside at monthly 1:1s for this. In-house training is available to all individuals to prepare for a higher role. There is a programme to manage secondments so that staff can experience different roles.

HP expects managers to have honest discussions with their people when reviewing performance and giving feedback. New managers are given extensive training to develop this expectation and the skills required. If there are concerns about an individual's performance the manager is expected to explore potential causes e.g. family problems, race, stress, skills or capability gap. Staff surveys suggest that employees value the open dialogue in performance reviews and development planning. There is perceived balance between the role of the individual and manager in ensuring appropriate development is identified and received.

Managers also attend a diversity workshop that challenges their core views and beliefs, and the effect they can have on others. This is as much about personal style as it is about race or gender prejudice.

Hewlett Packard encourages internal networks and there is a 'people of colour' network which was being launched as this report was being written. The network is expected to be self-supporting and create an environment to explore culture, its barriers and solutions in the workplace – which the organisation hopes to learn from.

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Mentoring is formalised and everyone is encouraged to have one. The individual needs to ask for a mentor, and whilst guidelines exist, the nature of the mentoring relationship is left to the two individuals to decide.

Contact: Annabel Stewart 0117 312 9513

HSBC

Recruitment

The bank runs a fellowship programme that provides penultimate year minority ethnic students with development and training to help them compete more effectively in the bank's graduate selection process, for which they are actively encouraged to apply.

HSBC contributes mentors to the 'national mentoring consortium'. This mentoring scheme is aimed specifically at minority ethnic students, from a range of universities. The bank hopes this will encourage additional applications.

Career development

All staff and managers have quarterly performance reviews, where there is an opportunity to explore the development needs and aspirations of the individual. They believe the performance review system should not provide any surprises at the end of the year. The annual review brings together the three earlier reviews and the performance objectives for the year.

HSBC has a Cultural Diversity Forum, which was set up and is run by minority ethnic staff. Members decide upon which issues to discuss and use the meetings as a useful networking opportunity.

Career progression

The central HR function manages a database with all people in a management role, where all performance review data and comments are held. When a management position becomes available, details of the job and person specification are provided to people nationally who have been identified as eligible for promotion. This prevents suitable candidates being excluded.

Interviews are based on job criteria and their performance is scored against these, ensuring the assessment is comprehensive.

*Contact: Roy Griffiths 020 7260 8000
Anne Watts OBE 020 7260 7146*

Littlewoods

Career development

Individuals are asked to prepare for 1:1 annual reviews by considering their strengths and weaknesses ahead of the meeting. Reviews are run against job competence and behavioural competencies. The behavioural competencies are drawn from Littlewoods PRIDE values, which drive their culture.

- P – Pursuing excellence for customers
- R – Respect and dignity
- I – Ideas galore
- D – Deliver value (internally)
- E – Enjoy the journey

Career progression

Assessment centres, administered by qualified HR people, are used for placing people in management roles. Competencies are used for the assessment and include problem solving and fact finding. Littlewoods believe that assessment centres provide a fair and transparent process for all applicants.

Feedback is given to all candidates after all centres have been run.

Contact: Edna Gibson 0151 235 2222

London Underground

Recruitment

Recruiting staff for its stations is done through assessment centres. The key focus is on ensuring practical skills such as writing, numeracy and timetable reading. They are also testing to establish each individual's boredom threshold, as many station jobs are repetitive in nature. 30% of station staff at junior level are from visible minority ethnic backgrounds. The assessment centres are deemed to be successful because they focus on practical skills that make evaluation simpler and clearer for all to understand.

Career development

London Underground encourages people to apply for development. During performance reviews, which take place two times a year, individuals are asked what their aspirations are to move to a higher role. The discussion is based around job competencies and the specific behaviours required. This aids the individual to understand what is required from them to

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prepare for a higher role in one or two years. Examples of competencies and behaviours are customer awareness, teamwork and safety responsibility. Secondments and coaching sessions are organised to enable these skills to be developed. There is also a pilot being run to link up with NVQs in order to make experience and skills more transferable.

They believe their performance system is clearly communicated and understood by staff. A key catalyst to moving the organisation down this road has been their pursuit of registration for "Investors in People".

Career progression

London Underground has initiated work at grass roots level to support staff from ethnic minorities taking on more responsibility, which they hope will result in more senior positions being taken in the fullness of time. Individuals are encouraged to signal their desire to take on additional responsibilities. They request development (on the job) and will be given the opportunity to spend time learning about the role, after which they go onto a waiting list. As jobs become vacant they are invited to attend the selection process. This involves an interview with the line manager and HR, and some practical skills tests. The interview is based on the job description and person specification for the role. Selection for Supervisor, Duty Manager and Group Station Manager involves aptitude tests and a presentation, in addition to the interview. The role of HR is to support the line manager through the process and ensure it is fair for all the candidates.

Contact: Dominique Pearson 020 7918 3637

Manchester City Council

Career development

Development centres are run for minority ethnic employees to improve their chances of reaching higher management positions within the council. There is a selection process for those in middle management positions and 32 people were successful out of 55 applicants. At a two-day residential development centre participants go through a series of assessment exercises set against management competencies developed by the local authority for all managers. The exercises included giving a presentation, writing a report, a financial exercise and a role-play. These are observed by trained facilitators who give feedback to individuals after each session. These reviews feed directly into the creation of an individual development plan. After the development centre these are worked on by the participant and their line manager for the remainder of the programme. Where there are common development needs training sessions are organised and run for the participants.

The programme includes mentoring from directors and assistant directors for each of the participants. This is considered to be one of the most powerful elements of the programme, giving participants insight to strategic management issues. Individuals who achieved

promotion felt their mentor was critical in helping them to transition into the new role. From the 29 people who completed the programme, ten achieved significant promotion within the council and two had left to join other organisations at a higher level. Feedback from participants has been very positive.

It also raised expectations, which have led to some frustration for those who have not achieved a promotion. Questions have been asked about the appropriateness and fairness of panel interviews to select people for promotion.

Contact: Jo Somerset

NHS Executive

The NHS has one million staff working in 500 autonomous employment organisations. Only 25% of staff are in the open labour market with the rest needing professional qualifications for entry.

Recruitment

The NHS recognises that whilst 20% of entrants to medical school are from Indian or Chinese origin, African Caribbeans are poorly represented. To address this they began an outreach programme with schools and colleges. The programme, run by individual medical schools, provides coaching and support to show what medicine is about and encourage people to think about a career in it. This is a long-term strategy and early results are now indicating there is growth in applications from the schools and colleges targeted.

The NHS has introduced national standards for selection and recruitment (known as the orange book). Selection uses a competency framework, which the NHS considers to be 'best practice'. Used together with person specifications, to identify individual qualities and experiences, it has enabled them to select the best candidates. Selectors have been given training to skill them in this approach. The new approach has challenged some old habits – bias towards specific medical schools and the use of references.

Attracting new nurses needed a targeted advertising campaign and recognition that nurses tend not to move away from their families. Through portraying health as a multi-cultural profession and being selective on geography and using local newspapers to advertise jobs, the NHS has achieved a fairer profile of people being accepted onto nursing courses. This is particularly true of Indian and African Caribbean people, although the numbers for Bengali and Pakistani men have not improved. They have begun work to explore why this is the case. The use of access courses have helped, although results are difficult to sustain because there are frequent changes and their credibility is undermined in the community, where word of mouth is vital.

ORGANISATION INTERVIEWS

Modern apprenticeships (age 17 to mid 30s) have been a successful route with Pakistanis. The learning here has been that it takes four/five intake cycles to establish the approach and make it self-sustaining through word of mouth. Therefore it is not a quick fix and takes up to five years to bear fruit.

Career development

Every NHS professional has a personal development plan, to maintain and develop their professional skills. Discussion on performance and development focuses on: reviewing current performance; ensuring balance in the role e.g. the individual may be focusing on aspects of the job they enjoy and neglecting other important tasks; setting objectives and discussing personal goals (short and long term).

To make this work well there has to be a good professional relationship in place. The manager must be able to challenge the individual as well as understand their aspirations and goals.

The NHS is also facilitating self-development networks. These meet at local and national levels and are good for individuals to explore their experience in the work place. The NHS minority ethnic network has been important to recognise the difference between the external labour market and the internal labour market. The network is helping to re-energise people who for years have been given little or no encouragement to progress in the NHS. They are encouraged to challenge their mindsets, as well as those within the NHS.

Career progression

The review examining a doctor's readiness to becoming a consultant has been made automatic after 15 years. Individuals now apply rather than have to wait to be nominated. In tandem with this change the number of people involved in the assessment have been reduced from 30 to 12, with a better balance of interests on the panel.

Consultants receiving bonuses, who are from ethnic minorities, have moved from 8% to 13%, which is normal among the consultant population. This is deemed to have resulted from the competency based approach now in use.

For main management and Executive Director level progression, assessment centres are used. These are seen as "very powerful" in removing organisational and cultural bias. The example given was the difference in the way verbal fluency was scored in interviews compared assessment centres, where group discussions give a better insight into communication, influencing, teamwork and supportiveness.

Contact: Laurence Benson 0113 254 6023

Rank Xerox

Recruitment

Many graduates join Rank Xerox through industrial placements.

The process of recruiting graduates places great emphasis on building strong relationships with universities. The recruiters work closely with course tutors to help them understand the type of people they want to bring to the company. The tutors have in effect become company advocates and encourage appropriate students to apply.

Whilst Rank Xerox monitors the ethnic mix of its people, they have no difficulty in delivering a balanced staff. Xerox believes their image and technical bias aids attracting a balanced workforce. Their relationships with head tutors have helped to identify strong candidates from ethnic minorities.

They recruit on merit through a role-specific competency interview, psychometric test and use supporting evidence of the individual's performance on the 50-week industrial placement.

Where more rigorous selection is required, and the numbers merit it, they use assessment centres. Candidates go through group exercises and take a numeric test.

Contact: Nick Leeson 01594 542421

- Culture is the taken-for-granted assumptions about how one should perceive, think, act and feel.
- Culture influences organisational behaviour in two ways:
 1. Employees bring their societal culture to work with them in the form of customs and language.
 2. Organisational culture in turn affects the individual's values, ethics, attitudes, assumptions and expectations
- When managing people at work the individual's societal culture, the organisational culture and any interaction between the two need to be taken into consideration

As organisations employ personnel from other countries, so it becomes increasingly important for managers to understand the implications of international organisational behaviour. Similarly, the increase in multiracial and multi-cultural workforces is making it necessary for us to closely study and understand the cultural values of staff and those to whom we provide a service.

This necessitates an understanding of the effects of national cultural diversity on the behaviour of organisations and on the individuals within them.

The importance for managers

- We need to be able to think cross-culturally
- We must be able to consider whether our management theory and practice will work with staff from other countries

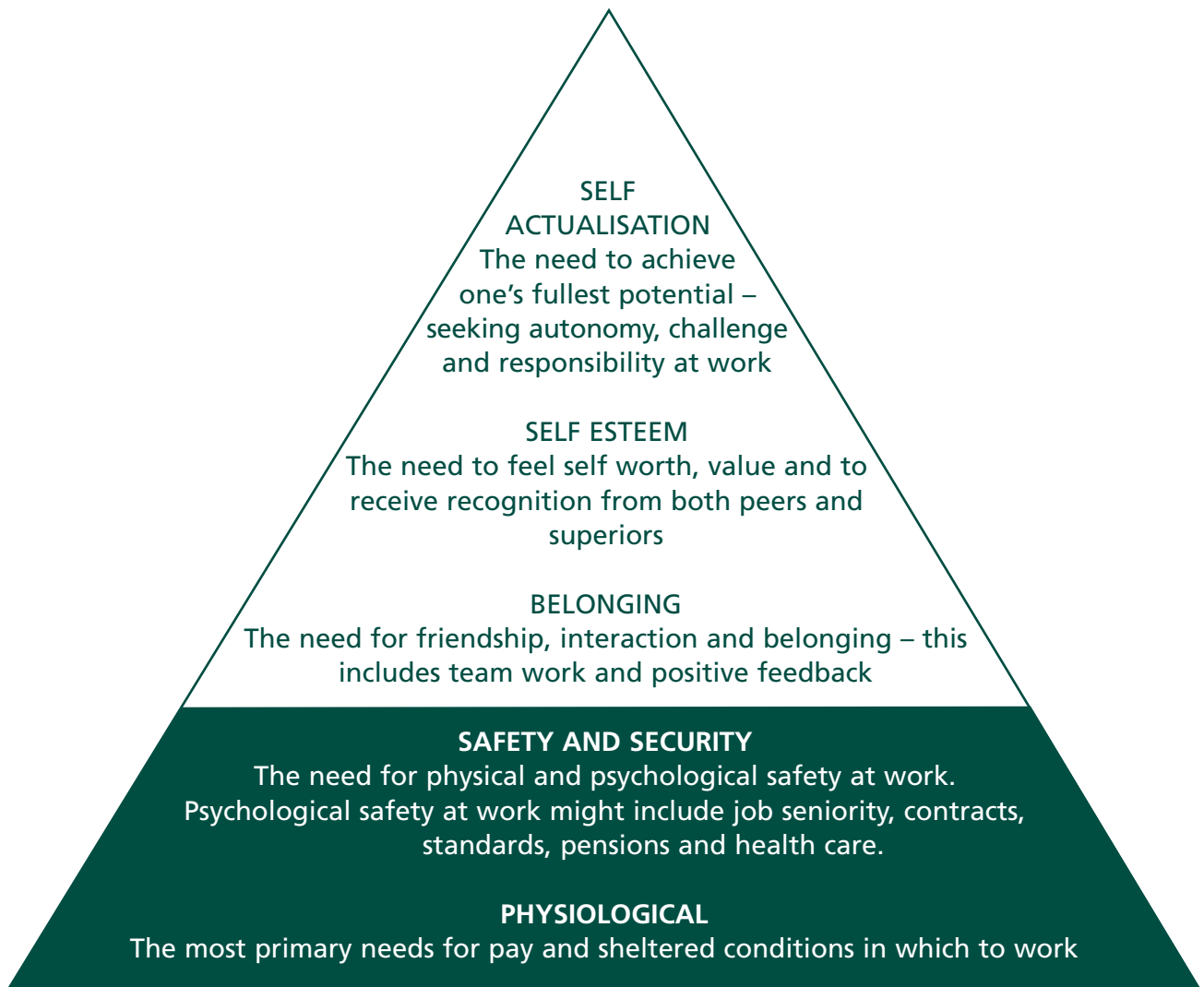
Geert Hofstede in his book 'Cultures and Organisations' (1991) has as his objective to help people in dealing with the differences in thinking, feeling and acting of people around the globe. He defines culture as "a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly shared with people who live or have lived in the same social environment, which is where it was learned. It is the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another".

Hofstede goes on to describe culture through the metaphor of "mental software – a usually unconscious conditioning which leaves individuals considerable freedom to think, feel, and act but within the constraints of what his or her social environment offers in terms of possible thoughts, feelings and actions".

Between 1967 and 1973 he worked as a psychologist for IBM and surveyed 116,000 employees who worked in 72 countries. For 40 countries there was sufficient information for systematic analysis which showed remarkable and very stable differences. He discovered four patterns and named them as follows:

1. **Power distance:** this is essentially used to categorise levels of inequality in organisations, which Hofstede claims will depend upon management style, the willingness of subordinates to disagree with superiors, and the educational level and status accruing to particular roles. Countries displaying high levels of power distance included France, Spain, Hong Kong and Iran. Here, the distance between individuals of high and low status is more marked. Countries as diverse as Germany, Italy, Australia and the USA were characterised as low power distance societies where there is greater interaction between people of different social classes and people move up in social status comparatively easily. Britain also emerged as a low power distance society.
2. **Uncertainty avoidance:** this refers to the extent to which members of a society feel threatened by unusual situations. In high uncertainty avoidance societies organisations will tend to be more bureaucratic and have more written rules and procedures. Managers will not be rewarded for risk taking and innovation. High uncertainty avoidance is said to be characteristic in France, Spain, Germany and many Latin American countries. Low-to-medium was displayed in the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, Britain and USA.
3. **Masculinity – femininity:** Hofstede used the term masculinity to designate the degree to which a culture emphasised assertiveness, dominance and independence. Femininity is a society's tendency to favour such values as interdependence, compassion and emotional openness. High masculinity societies included the USA, Italy, Germany and Japan. More feminine societies included the Netherlands and Scandinavian societies. Britain was located in the high masculinity group.
4. **Individualism (versus collectivism):** this refers to the tendency of a culture's norms and values to emphasise satisfying individual needs or group needs. Individualism emphasises the pursuit of individual goals, needs and success. In contrast the collectivist perspective emphasises group welfare and satisfaction. The USA, Britain, France and Spain display high individualism. This contrasts with Portugal, Hong Kong, India and Greece, which are low individualism societies.

Attributed to the Organisation Behaviour Department of the University of the West of England



MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS APPLIED TO ORGANISATIONS

(In a modern organisation the unshaded area impacts heavily upon motivation and morale)

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