

Who rings the bell? A gender study looking at the British Fire Service, its firefighters and equal opportunities; using academic reading, anecdotal experience and a survey of women firefighters.

ABSTRACT This dissertation provides a case study of the British Fire Service and has two purposes. Firstly to demonstrate how women can be denied equality at work by the politics of a male hegemonic discourse and secondly to provide argument as to how and why this situation should be reversed.

From an empirical base provided by primary research the experiences of women firefighters are analysed alongside their male counterparts. Foremost from the analysis comes the suggestion that the fire service is predominantly controlled by a culture that embraces all uniformed employees. This culture has the positive effect of providing the necessary bonding essential for the trust and loyalty that is expected amongst people who work together in such a dangerous environment. Paradoxically, however, as the culture has been 'unpacked', several negative effects have been identified that have contributed to the harassment of women firefighters and these will be discussed.

Throughout the case study a critical analysis of how the fire service has failed to adopt an adequate policy in regards to equal opportunities will take place and sound economic reasons for an improvement in policy will be established. However, because to-date neither moral or economic reasoning has persuaded the fire service to become equality conscious, a chapter has been devoted to the practical application of equality legislation in the fire service. This will show just how much fire service culture is in contradiction with the law and how women if they so desire can confront the harasser and his employer.

Contents

Introduction		1
1. The Fire Service, its structures and workforce.		5
2. Fire Station Politics and Management working against Equal Opportunities, an explanation and some possible solutions.		16
3. The Political Intervention in Equal Opportunities by the use of the law.		27
4. Summary		34
Bibliography		37
Appendix One	Primary Research; Methodology.	40
Appendix Two	Statistics from Home Office.	48
Appendix Three	Equal Opportunity Staff and Units.	52
Appendix Four	London Women's Advisory Committee & Helpline	54
Appendix Five	Occupations.	55
Appendix Six	Difficulties at work.	56
Appendix Seven	Education.	60
Appendix Eight	Promotion.	61
Appendix Nine	Firefighters Duties.	63
Appendix Ten	Changing/Washing facilities.	64
Appendix Eleven	Harassment.	67
Appendix Twelve	Time Out.	71
Appendix Thirteen	Company of other women.	72
Appendix Fourteen	Tania Clayton.	75
Appendix Fifteen	Sense of humour/culture.	80
Appendix Sixteen	Role	83
Appendix Seventeen	Networks	84
Appendix Eighteen	Backlash	88
Appendix Nineteen	Equal Opportunity Training	89
Appendix Twenty	Senior Officers	93
Appendix Twenty-One	Cutbacks in Fire Service	94
Appendix Twenty-Two	Bad Publicity	98

Introduction

Equality legislation since 1970 has provided an important lever for women to enter employment that had previously been judged as unsuitable for them. One of these occupations was firefighting. This study will demonstrate how this industry, with its distinctive male culture operates and how systemic resistance to change is still able to deny through the politics of a male hegemonic discourse equality for women.

As a piece of research the advice of Hammersley (1993) and Reinharz (1992) will be followed and efforts will be made to empower women firefighters, the subjects of the research. This will not be a full action program for change but the research analysis will include argument on how the equality of working women may be advanced. Specifically to this end a chapter has been dedicated to discuss equality legislation. By the conclusion a study will have been produced that will be of significance to academia, the fire service and provide a pilot for further research.

The study of gender in such a way is not unique, but no academic work in this area on the British Fire Service has ever been published. Initially, therefore, some primary research had to be completed to provide a basis for the whole dissertation. This involved a postal-survey of full-time women firefighters, to furnish a wide range of quantitative/qualitative data, followed by interviews with fire service employees and union officials. The volume of data provided from these sources proved difficult to manage and the time spent in doing this, particularly in transferring the questionnaire results onto S.P.S.S., was considerably greater than estimated.

The twenty five percent response rate, for the survey, falls just below the thirty to forty percent expected by Mc Neill (1990,p.40). However, replies were received

from twenty-four of the thirty-three fire brigades that employ women (72%)¹, providing a broad and substantive 'snapshot' of the attitudes and experiences of women firefighters. This data was supported by thirteen 'unstructured' interviews with fire service employees and union officials, and four observations of firefighters in groups. The research data was then analysed in 'integrated form' following Gans (Bryman, 1988, p.137-8). The primary research had at this stage reached a planned conclusion providing an in-depth, sound academic and representative sample on which to base the dissertation (appendix one).

Paralleling the primary research, authors on law, employment, gender, equal opportunities, local and national government were studied; and some of their views appear in the text. A first draft was then produced. Following this an extensive academic study of the police, a perceived similar occupation, was undertaken. This had been deliberately left to this stage to prevent the primary research and analysis from being corrupted to 'fit' other writers experience. The similarities between the police and the fire service were so significant that this proved a wise decision, and the unique qualities of the fire service were maintained in what otherwise may have been a reproduction of academic studies on the police.

On occasions this work is anecdotal but this is undertaken with the authority provided from thirty-one years experience as a firefighter, twenty-one of those as a station officer, trade union involvement up to national level, Graduate Membership of the Institute of Fire Engineers, a daughter who is a firefighter and the objectivity that three years study at degree level provides.

¹Whenever a percentage figure is used from the survey an appendix reference will appear within the paragraph. This appendix will provide the original source of data.

As anticipated the sexual harassment of women was clearly identified by the research and it is necessary to define such a concept before moving into the main body of work. Three interpretations were considered, the first by Hadjifotiou (1983, p.8) was lengthy and came too close to a legal explanation to be of real use.

A broad definition of sexual harassment would include repeated and unwanted verbal or sexual advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminating remarks which are offensive to the worker involved, which cause the worker to feel threatened, humiliated, patronised or harassed or which interfere with the worker's job performance, undermine job security or create a threatening or intimidating work environment. Sexual harassment can take many forms, from leering, ridicule, embarrassing remarks or jokes, unwelcome comments about dress or appearance, deliberate abuse, the repeated and /or unwanted physical contact demands for sexual favours, or physical assaults on workers (Hadjifotiou, 1983, p.8).

Sumrall and Taylor (1992, p.vii) in following W.I. Thomas by suggesting that reality for the individual equates to reality in outcome for that individual, make an important sociological point and this should be remembered throughout the dissertation, but the definition was considered too broad.

Sexual harassment is sexual pressure that one is not in a position to refuse, it is deliberate or repeated sexual behaviour that is unwelcome. It is about male privilege and dominance, and it is not necessarily explicitly sexual: ...But as a recent letter to the editor of Z Magazine states, '...women get to determine what is and isn't sexual harassment. Just as blacks should determine what is racist and gays what is homophobic. And if we say it happened, it happened (Sumrall and Taylor, 1992, p.vii my underline)

Jane Moorman (Guardian 13-1-96) provides a concise and easily remembered definition, but the legal formality lacks any subjectivity and again failed to identify how sexual harassment should be understood within the terms of this dissertation.

Sexual harassment is described by the European Commission as conduct that is unwanted, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient. In many instances, it is not only unwanted but embarrassing and humiliating for the victim. One offence can be enough to amount to sexual harassment (Jane Moorman, Solicitor, Guardian, 13-1-96)

Therefore a definition, working from the experiences of women firefighters and the authors studied, was crafted to provide an explanation that would operationalise sexual harassment in the context of this dissertation. *Sexual harassment occurs with or without women's knowledge when male power is knowingly or unknowingly used in an attempt to exclude women from participating as firefighters or to force women into conforming with male fire service rules, culture or structures.*

The Fire Service, its structures and workforce.

Starting from an explanation of the structure of the fire service, this chapter will widen to establish how the fire service is managed and the 'nature' of a firefighter. The main focus will be to demonstrate how fire service culture is intrinsic to all levels of the profession and how this affects women firefighters. This debate will often be a generalisation, providing stereotypes; however, this is felt justified because firefighters bond as a team, operationally, at the station and during leisure. This bonding is essential for an efficient fire service and out of this a culture has developed which defines the requirements of a 'real firefighter'. Paradoxically, fire service culture has several negative consequences that form an instrumental block to control and reinforce bad practice, especially with regard to equal opportunities. By the end of the chapter the fire service will be shown to be a patriarchal², white, working class occupation, with a culture that frequently works for 'its' own ends and not those of management.

The Home Office coordinates the fire service nationally through the Fire Service Inspectorate and the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council. County Councils, funded by block grant from government and community charges have the responsibility for creating Fire Authorities to maintain the sixty-four fire brigades in Britain (Fire Service Act 1947). This is similar to the arrangements for police authorities but political control at a local level is more extensive than for the police.

One-hundred-and-thirty-three full-time women firefighters are employed in thirty-three of the sixty-four fire brigades and they work alongside over thirty nine *thousand* men. These statistics alone provide evidence to suggest that

²Patriarchy is "men's domination of each other...a set of social relations..in which there are hierarchical relations between men, and solidarity among them, which enable them to control women" (Hartmann, 1979,p.232)

discrimination against women may be occurring and this would be substantiated by authors on discrimination (Skellington, 1992, p.27; Palmer, 1992, p.21; Morris and Nott, 1991, p.78). This suggestion is supported by women's enrolment rate currently running at less than five percent of total enrolments and their resignation rates that are more than double those of men (appendix two).

The first women firefighters was employed in 1982 after political intervention by London's radical labour authority pursuing equality issues (see Lovenduski and Randall, 1993). By this time equality legislation had already been established for a decade and without the efforts of Ken Livingstone (leader of the G.L.C.) women may have waited longer to gain access to employment as firefighters. London now employs the largest number of women firefighters (56) and a dedicated equality unit. This unit has a staff of seven and responsibility for equality matters throughout the Brigade, including training (appendix three).

The London Fire Brigade, first under the Greater London Council and, subsequent to abolition, under the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority, has led the Fire Service nationally in implementing and embedding good practice in equality (L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit, 1995, p.1).

The shade of political control at local authority level has considerable impact on how brigades' approach equality issues and is especially important for relations with the trade union.

The Fire Brigades Union is the representative body for firefighters and, despite initial reticence, 'spearheads' the employment of women firefighters³. This involves pursuing the employers on equality issues, carrying out a high profile campaign of equality education amongst its membership, supporting the London Women's Advisory Committee, a national network for women and a twenty four hour 'helpline' (appendix four).

³and ethnic minorities

The union's leadership considers equality to be a fundamental responsibility for the union (interview with head office official), but they may not have whole hearted support from the membership in this approach. An Executive Council Member suggested that "*some firefighters are sexist and racist*" and this view will be supported later by data from the survey. Walby (1986, p.207 -218) identifies a similar process occurring within many trade unions with sexism common amongst rank and file members whilst their leaders, more egalitarian in their outlook, support women's equality.

Male firefighters are drawn from such diverse occupations as pastry cooks, scientists and actors, but the majority have experience in skilled and semi-skilled manual trades. Only two women respondents to the survey had manual trade experience with the remainder (94%) distributed between childcare, leisure, clerical and scientific industries (appendix five).

Women's lack of experience in manual trades provides a basis to suggest that the gender division of labour in previous occupations contributed to their difficulties experienced through lack of strength and/or technical knowledge on entry to the fire service. Importantly the majority of women (72.2%) felt that being a women created difficulties at this time (appendix six, see also Bucke 1994).

Academically, male firefighters lack formal qualifications, but this is more a product of their working class background than their lack of intellect (see Bilton et al 1987). This is not mirrored by women with 20.6 % having degrees and only 2.9% lacking qualifications. This apparent over-qualification of women may be a reflection of the high pay scales offered for male labelled occupations and is worthy of further research (appendix seven). However, the mix of occupational/academic skills enhances the capacity of fire brigades to cope with the myriad of emergencies they

deal with ⁴and this will generally be a 'fire call', when ten firefighters are dispatched on two fire appliances from a fire station.

A fire station resembles a family unit, a men's club, or a ship at sea, depending on the activity at the time. Prior to the war firefighters were employed almost exclusively from Naval backgrounds (Bailey, 1992) and this connection can still be recognised from the anthropological study on H.M.S. Brilliant (Christopher Terrill, 1995). Management traditionally relies on a quasi-military discipline operating within a 'Webarian' hierarchical bureaucracy, but the military comparison only retains significance on the fireground⁵. At the station the traditional reliance on discipline has ceased to be effective and the fire service has not yet found an adequate procedure to control firefighters. The effects of new management techniques (Farnham and Horton, 1993) have not yet penetrated the fire service at station level, and this vacuum of control creates considerable difficulties for managers.

Management within the Fire Service is by uniformed officers who are *all* recruited from the ranks, with no fast track for graduate entry and this significantly limits the abilities of officers (appendix eight). Lack of suitable applicants frequently leads to officers being promoted who are inefficient and this is recognised by principle officers. *"The fire and rescue service is concerned that it is unable to select sufficient numbers of suitable officers of the right management competencies to sustain a viable emergency service"* (Deputy Chief Fire Officer Turner, Essex Fire Brigade, in McGuirk, 1994, p.1). Many experienced firefighters ignore the opportunity of promotion preferring to use their entrepreneurial skills away from the station, where by secondary employment they often

⁴The fire service prides itself that it will respond to almost any call for help from the public.

⁵the colloquial term fireground applies to areas in which the fire service is deployed operationally, i.e. battleground for the armed forces.

earn salaries in excess of their officers. When this 'skill' is pitted against officers, rather than harnessed by sound management techniques, then control in the workplace is difficult and this will become increasingly apparent as the study proceeds.

Whilst the leadership of officers is rarely disputed at operational incidents, non-operational work, that does not actually affect '*doing the job*', is marginalised by fire service culture. Experienced firefighters manoeuvre and subvert management intentions when not firefighting and provide a cloak of secrecy over their activities⁶ (appendix nine). Some Station Officers establish leadership of the cultural group, but this can only be done by operating within cultural confines with less capable officers retreating to their offices leaving a working environment where harassment can occur unchecked. Almost in acquiescence to fire service culture few performance indicators are set by management to monitor non-operational work requirements and this reinforces the argument that promotion from the ranks has significant 'drawbacks' for officers who have been 'indoctrinated' in early service. Senior management appear unable/unwilling to penetrate and change such negative cultural control, despite this being well recognised (L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit, 1995, p.13).

The positive effects of fire service culture are instrumental in creating a common understanding *throughout* the fire service that ensures firefighters/officers will 'stop at nothing' to get 'the job' done. This provides firefighters with the capacity to walk into 'danger' whilst the public retreats, a circumstance that only occurs after identifying in advance the trust and loyalty expected from watch members will be forthcoming. In order to achieve this individual personalities are moulded to the group need by cultural leaders

6

This is very close to the 'rubbish work' that Reiner (1985) identifies in the police. See also McConville and Shepherd, 1992 p.219, for a similar, although not identical effect occurring through police culture. Maidment and Thompson 1993 also write concerning how bureaucracies and hierarchies are able to benefit the group whilst hiding the affect from managers.

who continually test and police member's loyalty through practical jokes which can take the most bizarre form. *"The more hilarious forms of firefighter humour are usually at someone else's expense* (Floren, in Martin, 1988, p.156).

Cultural humour has the added advantage of easing the considerable periods of inactivity at stations and *importantly* does much to relieve the stress that occurs from working in a dangerous and harrowing occupation. The incidence of post traumatic stress occurring within the fire service since equality and politically correct behaviour have become 'agendered' items appears to be increasing, but this suggestion needs further research as other factors may be at play. However, there is a need to ascertain that lack of understanding of equality issues is not imposing an 'iron cage of rationality' in certain workplaces, preventing humour and instituting a greyness to life that could have serious consequences for both bonding and stress.

The formation of peer groups as 'guardians' of fire service culture exhibits recognisable parallels with the 'canteen culture' of the police (Smith and Gray, 1985, Graef, 1989). However, it is how fire service culture operates and extends that proves problematic, particularly for equality issues. The difficulty that power exercised by peer leaders can be more 'real' in the station environment than their officers, has already been suggested and will re-occur throughout this study. No requirement for bonding can justify harassment and the needs of individuals to be respected. Cultural 'policing' is well recognised by the Fire Brigade Union which suggests, *"no group appears to escape the bullies that contaminate the Fire Service, anyone who does not conform with the bigots idea of a fireman is likely to receive unwelcome attention"* (as yet unpublished Region 10 Report to Fire Brigades Union Equal Opportunity Audit 1995)⁷.

⁷ Region ten covers Hertfordshire, Essex, Bedfordshire, Cambridge, Suffolk and Norfolk.

The periods of relative inactivity when not firefighting and the fact that the same firefighters often work together for up to thirty years ensure that fire service culture, in all its aspects, transcends generations. This effect has been recognised by Cockburn in other 'male' industries.

The daily business of organizations, their operation as male power bases, depends on men generating a closeness between men. Clubbing and socializing, as we have seen, helps men control information. The transmission of power from one generation of men to another, for example, calls for the sponsorship of younger men by older men. Homosociality is thus the dominant cultural form in male dominated organizations (Cockburn, 1991, p.189. my underline)

Fire Service culture/homosociality supports infidelity and as a group some/many firefighters frequent night clubs and discos for nights out 'with the boys' with the intent of meeting women as 'pit stops to boost sexual egos'⁸. Cultural patronage for such attitudes allows the station to provide a sexual base for 'fielding' telephone calls from wives and 'illicit' sexual partners and for personnel to 'stay-over' after nights out. In such an environment women can find great difficulty in being seen as individuals rather than sexual objects.

The objectification of women and their bodies, exacerbated by pornographic materials common on fire stations, is recognised as an important statement of male power and gives "*a clear warning that women who work are in a male world*" [(Hadjifotiou, 1993, p.15) (see also Walby, 1988,1990, Herbert, 1994 Dworkin 1981, Connell, 1995)] and "*in a capitalist patriarchy, women's bodies can be exploited and exposed as symbols of pleasure, luxury, and convenience*" (Tong, 1989, p.191). This suggests that women firefighters must first overcome their objectification before being recognised as firefighters. Indeed, given that women use the same 'changing/washing' facilities as men and 75.% are happy (?) to do so suggests that cultural camouflage hides the power processes at play on these occasions as women culturally bond with the men and are 'forced' to undress in front of them (appendix ten).

⁸see Reiner, 1985, p.99 for a comparison with the police

On a fire station cultural bonding may not be a pleasant process and recruit firefighters are moulded/harassed/bullied from their first day at work, with 'boy's club rules' deterring complaints. This tests firefighters for acceptance into the group and various 'rites of passage' may be employed. The L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit (1995) suggests that women firefighters experience similar 'initiation' treatment to their male colleagues, but this assessment is challenged given the sexism operating within the fire service and the 63.9% of women identified by the survey as being harassed at work (appendix eleven).

The data analysed by London's audit is possibly an example of women's reluctance to acknowledge their treatment and an acceptance of harassment in a desire to conform, a process Tanya Clayton fell foul of but only after considerable effort to fit in (Clayton v Hereford and Worcester, 1995, Case no 27856/93). Failure to adjust would result in alienation to the periphery of station life and often resignation (Time Out, 15-9-93 appendix twelve). 'Initiations' would be identified by firefighters as 'having a laugh' but this is often no 'laugh' for the recipient and may be a deliberate process of harassment to reinforce "*male exclusionary practices*" (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990, p.161) which are well documented.

The most publicized recent event of this order was in the London Fire Brigade in the mid-1980's when women, testing their new rights of entry under the equal opportunity legislation, were subject to gross physical and sexual attacks to discourage them (Walby, 1991, p.52).

The survey indicates that 97.1% of respondents are the only women employed on the watch and 68.8% 'would be pleased' if another women were posted to their station (appendix thirteen). When this is considered alongside the 63.9% who suggest they have been harassed at work and the shaming ethnographic evidence provided by the survey (appendix eleven) this indicates an ill-conceived practice. Management are aware of the effects of fire service culture (L.F.C.D.A. equality audit, 1994) but by isolating women they are almost inviting harassment. If

management had avoided this practice then perhaps the 1995 Clayton case (appendix fourteen) may never have occurred. However, many women have survived 'exclusion' by harassers and accepted the culture, but why have they done this?

The survey suggests the majority of women found the 'sense of humour/culture' 'suited them' (58.8% rising to 69% after first year), although the qualitative data fails to support this figure and accords with the argument of this dissertation that the culture is responsible for harassment (appendix fifteen, see also eleven). This apparent acceptance of the culture may occur through women becoming 'surrogate males' but this is only acknowledged by 15.4% of women (appendix sixteen). However, such are the effects of fire service culture that women may not be aware this has happened or unwilling to admit it. This has significance for women and highlights an area for further study. Cockburn addresses the problem in a different industry but her words seem particularly appropriate to the argument of this dissertation.

The environment they have joined, which is that of men of power, has threatened to repel them [women] if they do not adopt its culture. Life experience makes us what we are and, one woman said, 'look at what you have to do to get there'. Once such women have made a decision to compete with men there is a tendency for them gradually to take on masculine traits...[with men] defeminize [ing] women as they filter them through (Cockburn, 1991, p.69).

Therefore it is suggested that when male power/harassment has failed to exclude women, the fire service's "sex-typing" (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990, p. 43) as a macho environment is retained by "keeping women in their place" (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990, p.101) and transforming them into surrogate males. Such use of male power would not be without precedence (see (Connell, 1987, 1995, Walby, 1991) for the 'nature' of male work has to be defended.

Heavy manual work calls for strength, endurance, a degree of insensitivity and toughness, and group solidarity. Emphasizing the masculinity of industrial labour has been both the means of survival in exploitative class relations and a means of asserting superiority over women.....working men's bodily capacities are their economic asset and what they put on the labour market" (Connell, 1995,p.55 my underline).

This chapter has identified how the fire service is organised and that firefighter's are predominately patriarchal white working class males with very conservative tendencies. The effects of firefighter's culture have been outlined and evidence has been presented which indicates that station officers frequently surrender their managerial responsibility to the culture, a process that is not opposed by senior officers. As such fire service culture can be characterised as providing little time for the dignity of the individual, neither male or female, black nor white, homosexual or lesbian, and the opening arguments how this effects women firefighters have been made.

Fire Station Politics and Management working against Equal Opportunities, an explanation and some possible solutions.

Providing for 'the dignity of women at work' as required by the European Union (see McCrudden, 1987 and Equal Opportunity Review no.41, 1992) within such a distinctly male culture has provided a considerable dilemma for the fire service. Unlike many male industries the bonding of firefighters is a necessary prerequisite to provide safety and trust at operational incidents and is therefore is not peripheral. To break that bond of trust would undoubtedly result in more firefighters being killed and injured and yet the paradoxical negative cultural effects that result in harassment need to be challenged. Education can play an important role in that direction and this chapter will look closely at equality/diversity training. In doing so some systemic structural problems will be identified that prevent/obstruct equal opportunities. The power of male culture will once again feature in this chapter and it will be identified how this isolates women from each other and adjusts their identity. Furthermore cultural structures/expectations will be discussed that allow harassment to go unchecked and a marked weakness within the fire service discipline code will be illustrated. Following this, argument will be made to support equal opportunity training on financial grounds.

Dominant personalities within the Fire Service have been recognised in chapter one as holding considerable power and the cultural affect of "*keep it on the island*".⁹*..the importance of being part of the team "* (L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit, 1995, p.13) creates difficulties if women wanted to speak out against harassment. Women's reluctance to

⁹*'keeping it on the island' is a fire service term for not allowing problems to leave the station and come to the notice of senior management. This cultural belief would also apply at all levels viz a vis the Brigade and the Home Office / Public.*

object is clearly identified within the survey where 63.9% acknowledged they had been harassed at work, but none of them had sought official assistance (appendix eleven)¹⁰. This suggests that women are accepting harassment as inevitable and are not complaining. This trait is identified by bell hooks (1989) who argues that women comply with male power by their silence. Linking back to chapter one, women may be accepting 'honoury' status as surrogate males to avoid marginalisation, "*what automatically happens is that women tend to assimilate themselves to the male model*". (Bono and Kemp 1991 P.116) this proposition is supported by Cockburn. *Women are in a cleft stick. They do prefer what they call 'women's values' and share an idea of what they mean by that...Most women do not like masculinity and do not want to emulate it. However, most of them are not prepared to forfeit men's appreciation...The effect of such discourse is quite material. Women are divided from each other in such a way that solidarity among them is unlikely* (Cockburn, 1991, p.70)

Women's indifference to the national network, established by the Fire Brigades Union to support them, with over 70% not participating follows Cockburn's and hooks' argument. This result should not be surprising given that *only* 12.9 % of women considered their male colleagues supported such networks, and some of the qualitative evidence is disparaging (appendix seventeen). Women's need to belong to the watch/male group will often seem more attractive than risking further alienation by participating in what males consider to be a 'separatist organization'. *The position of the minority of women who enter male-dominated trades and professions is rather different. They are faced [by contrast], with the problem of fitting into a male occupational culture... Many individual women succeed conspicuously in such jobs by outplaying the men at their own games of toughness and competitiveness. Yet even these women may privately confess to feelings of isolation and vulnerability. The setting up of female support or 'networking' groups is one way that some women have tried to counterpoise some element of female culture to the male work environment* (Bradley, 1989,p.230).

¹⁰The one case identified in the survey received support but had not asked for it.

It could be that women do not want to be included in women's only organisations, however, unless women feel free to participate and not at risk of harassment/backlash (see Faludi, 1992, appendix eighteen) from doing so, then the choice for them is limited.

This subject needs further research, for until women actually 'share' on this issue then it is unlikely that many will feel confident enough to take action against harassment and bad practice. Indeed, women may not be aware that others are experiencing similar problems and consider that harassment is their fault, with the result that they internalise the problem. Carol Atkins identifies this poignantly. *"I thought something in my behaviour had triggered the harassment...So I did not say anything"* (Atkins in Simrall and Taylor, 1992, p.29). Indeed, without the support the network provides harassment would often go unnoticed by management, for as identified earlier women firefighters are not complaining.

However, once harassment has taken place the system has failed. It has failed women, and men too, for there is a 'common-sense' notion that men are acting naturally and this is not so.

Sexual harassment has nothing to do with natural male behaviour. Men are not born knowing how to sexually harass others, Sexual harassment is learned social behaviour, learned within the context of a sexist environment [in this case the fire station]. If sexist practices and sexual discriminations were eradicated, sexual harassment too would stop (Herbert, 1994, p.71)

Therefore it is necessary to provide training to stop such common sense beliefs.

At present, equal opportunity training within the fire service appears inadequate, despite 'apparent' Home Office support. The survey indicates ten women (31.4%) have received no training in equal opportunities and only three (17.6%) are receiving ongoing training. Only

six women (26.1%) considered the training was useful and the ethnographic comments continue the negative picture (appendix nineteen).

Equality training often forms part of initial training and the fire service seem to anticipate that by educating recruits, eventually, the whole environment will change. This is a misplaced expectation, for it is unlikely that the negative effects of homosocial/cultural persuasion will be overcome by such measures. Training in equality is similar to learning to climb a ladder, bad habits have first to be overcome and new skills reinforced and developed. Without ongoing training 'new' firefighters will soon be 'straightened out' by their peers and negative cultural beliefs will not change. This had been recognised by one equality manager who accepted, in 1991, that male attitudes were not changing and had moved to rely on compulsion as much as persuasion. This is no long term solution, if any solution at all.

The failure of some brigades to recognise that equality training has either failed (all brigades could have carried out a simple survey into the adequacy of equality training as this survey has), or even necessary, demonstrates how little priority equality matters are given. This has been commented on in the Clayton judgement and from the results of the survey would probably apply to most brigades.

45.14 [tribunals comment in the judgement] Firefighters never had any training to cope with the situation that they faced. What should their expectations have been? How were they going to adjust? This was the very first time that they were moving from their totally male world. Whilst the aims of the Chief Officer and his Deputy were laudable, they singularly failed to train, discuss or teach those under them. There was a total lack of awareness throughout the force. As can be seen from the evidence there seems even now, despite what the force, are now attempting to do a singular lack of understanding, feeling and sensitivity in connection with equal opportunities. at Sub Officer level and below ¹¹.

(Clayton v Hereford and Worcester, 1995, Case no 27856/93 p.105 my underline).

¹¹Within this brigade the officer in charge of the station is a sub officer and not a station officer and earlier comments about station officer would apply here.

This lack of emphasis on equality training may occur because senior management consider they have '*more important*' issues to deal with, inadequate funding, or management's own lack of equality training. However, this is not sustainable and can have serious consequences as will be demonstrated in chapter three. Why? the Home Office has not insisted on all brigades having equality units, as Bucke 1994 suggests, seems incomprehensible.

One training approach that should be considered is to empower women *and their supporters* to speak out immediately harassment occurs, a point the Union subscribes to. "*The most effective way of dealing with discrimination and harassment in the workplace is to nip it in the bud, straight away*" (Fighting For Fairness, 1990, p.4). More positively Cockburn suggests that women should "*confront head on men's sense of owning the organisation*" (Cockburn, 1991, p.25) and this should remove any confusion amongst men as to how women want to be treated. This is important, for as Giddens suggests (Talk Anglia 28-2-96) many men are experiencing 'ontological uncertainty' about their role in contemporary society and no longer 'know' how women want to be treated. Furthermore, a failure to confront harassment by remaining silent will not cause 'it to go away' as frequently harassment follows an accumulating trend.

Research suggests that ignoring sexual harassment only makes it worse. The reason is that sexual harassment is behaviour based on abuse of power and as such is used as a mechanism to control the recipient. Remaining silent about such behaviour does not stop it. In fact often the opposite occurs. The perpetrator believes that the messages are not being received, so the unwanted attention gets worse or more frequent
(Herbert, 1994, p.76)

However, many women do not wish to be 'singled' out for specific training and consider that they suffer already from being "*high profile objects of interest*" (interview with women firefighter, see also Bucke 1994 and appendix eighteen). Herbert (1994) supports these women, considering men are the harassers and they need educating not women. Herbert's

stance may be morally correct, however, this is a less than practical approach given the ratio of men to women firefighters. Specifically empowering women could be sustainable and justified if handled professionally. Particularly if one considers that women are probably only afraid of high profiling because of the increased harassment/backlash that is caused. Failure to deal with harassment at source eventually shifts the burden to discipline structures. In this area the fire service has an additional problem that may cause harassment to go unnoticed until serious levels are reached; as Clayton has shown (Industrial Tribunal Report 27856/93 p.96).

The Fire Service Disciplinary Regulations (1945) are an Act of Parliament and all allegations are formally investigated. Written statements are taken, many of them under a police style caution, and once the evidence is collated this passes to a principle officer. Then he (there are no women senior officers) decides if a full hearing¹² is necessary, or to deal informally with the allegation. Such procedures can take longer than six months, are time wasting and leave little scope for middle management to ameliorate at a local level¹³. This 'sledge hammer' effect of Fire Service discipline makes it unlikely that a women will make allegations over harassment at an early stage, particularly if they considered officers would not deal with the matter locally. However, it is at this level that harassment can normally be stopped, as mentioned earlier, without the need for official enquiries.

An example of poor equality management has been found in qualitative interviewing. A women firefighter, Clare, was having difficulties with her workmates. Clare consulted a colleague, who mentioned this to a union representative, who then informed the Brigade

¹² The hearing of the case assumes court martial proportions and fines, demotion and dismissal are available to the panel of officers who sit in judgement. Importantly the F.B.U. will not provide assistance to members who are considered by them to be guilty of harassment.

¹³If middle management deal with any complaint locally instead of forwarding it through channels they can be liable for disciplinary charges.

without referring to Clare. *Six months later* the alleged harassers were transferred from Clare's station. This despite Clare having dealt with the matter herself by this time. Rumour within the Brigade then suggested that Clare had broken trust and the blame for the transfers was shifted onto her.

This example highlights the Fire Service's ineptitude in dealing with harassment. Clare felt betrayed by her union for dealing with her problem without her approval, although this is against union policy (*Fighting for Fairness*, 1990 , p.3). All concerned became victims of the brigade's patronising fear of 'the weaker sex' being mistreated, resulting in a negative outcome that was no longer necessary. Such paternalistic overreaction to defending women follows much of the argument extended by Morris and Nott (1991) that they find so objectionable in the law.

In the case of paternalism, this is a deleterious effect in so far as it serves as an excuse to treat women in an inferior fashion. The award of additional rights offers more positive prospects if it were not for the fact that the philosophy it epitomises runs directly counter to the notion of eliminating discrimination (Morris & Nott,1991 p.51).

Transferring harassers appears to be a routine way of dealing with harassment (Palmer,1992, Herbert 1994) but this only moves the problem, often leaving the harasser confused as to correct behaviour. A more enlightened approach may have been to concentrate equality training at Clare's station to solve the problem at source. This would have prevented Clare from being accused of breaking trust and having the firefighters transferred, but this may *have* been the intention of managers.

The survey indicates that 32.4% of women do not consider senior management support the 'concept of women firefighters' (appendix twenty). Indeed, some ¹⁴ London firefighters,

¹⁴Individual experience suggests that the use of the word 'some' in this context is misplaced. Any survey carried out by the L.F.C.D.A. to be used 'in house', as this survey was, will perhaps not give a true indication of how the workforce actually feel. It is suggested that firefighters are unlikely to recognise the anonymity that such a survey will ensure and explain their true feelings on such matters for fear of how this could affect continued employment.

including senior management still "*manifest resistance....and resentment*" (L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit, 1995, p.2), to equal opportunity policies and that this has made victims of the minorities who were the intended "*beneficiaries of it*" (L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit, 1995, p.2). This reinforces the earlier argument supporting the suggestion that blame is transferred to the victim and not the harassers.

This is not unique to sexual discrimination, and can be recognised in the 'British' attitude to black migration in the 1960s where migrants became labelled problematic rather than racism (Skellington, 1992). Fundamental to any approach to redress the balance of power levelled against minorities is the need to gain recognition, by those being 'educated', that (normally) the majority 'create' the problem and not the minority. Until firefighters/officers recognise that women are not responsible for creating the bad practices that occur, but the politics of male hegemonic culture, no restriction or threat can break the underlying philosophy that exists. The Fire Service should realise that an attitude suggesting that 'no women would be harassed if they were not employed', or that 'she asked for it by being there in the first place', has no moral standpoint. However if morality is insufficiently persuasive then other arguments may need to be considered.

As economic efficiency becomes more important in Neo Liberal Britain (Jenkins, 1995, Farnham and Horton 1993) the fire service has not escaped cutbacks (appendix twenty one). Equal opportunities therefore must be identified as being of financial benefit. The loss of managerial time and the damage to moral occurring through harassment is considerable (L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit, 1995). One equality worker suggested that each industrial tribunal costs more in internal administrative costs than legal costs. Misplaced management loyalty to macho culture is therefore not only outdated but un-economic. An unhappy workforce is costly to maintain, resulting in "*reduced performance, increased sickness, absenteeism and workplace conflict*" (L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit, 1995, p.3).

Psychological and physical reactions, depression, insomnia, headaches, all indicate that harassment is a major contributor to stress at work. The long-term

damage to the health and personal well-being of people affected by work-related stress is well documented:

- * *decrease in job performance and job satisfaction;*
- * *absenteeism;*
- * *anxiety, tension, irritation, depression;*
- * *increased alcohol cigarette and drug use;*
- * *sleeplessness and tiredness;*
- * *problems with weight and diet;*
- * *migraine;*
- * *coronary heart disease;*
- * *difficulties with family and personal relationships;*
- * *physical and mental illness.*

When harassment becomes unbearable, women take action to remove themselves from the harasser by having days off, asking to be transferred to another section or leaving the job.

(Hadjifotiou, 1983, p.20-21)

Successful equal opportunities policy therefore is not a 'bolt on extra' which can be discarded as financial restrictions force cutbacks. Equality commitment and success are a fundamental requirement to maintain an efficient and cost effective workforce.

The uneconomic nature of failed equal opportunities policy are not just internal, proven serious acts of harassment can be expensive.

In one claim for assault and battery and false imprisonment against the London Fire Brigade, bought in the High Court, damages of £25,000 were agreed for a very serious harassment (including repeated advances, attempts to kiss and fondle) and victimisation..... The applicant also alleged that her employer has been negligent in not taking precautions to prevent the foreseeable harassment, she being one of the first female recruits to the Brigade (Palmer, 1992, p.228/9).

And when the legal and administrative costs are added, the figure can assume alarming proportions. Significantly the cap on harassment damages has now been removed

Marshall v South Hampton and South West Hampshire Area Health Authority. The limit on the Sex Discrimination Act on the maximum compensation recoverable by a victim of discrimination in respect of the loss and damage sustained is contrary to Article 9 of the European Commission's Equal

Treatment Directive 76/207, according to the historic decision of the European Court of Justice in this case.

(Equal Opportunities Review No 61, 1995, my underline)

and informed sources suggest that the Clayton case will provide record damages.

Further damage occurs to prestige when harassment cases are exposed by the media and this can have important 'knock on' effects. The Fire Service has a prominent profile and firefighters are held in high regard. Public support has been important in tempering expenditure cuts by government (Cambridge Evening News 30-1-96), and to-date no firefighters have been made redundant. This support could be seriously damaged if harassment cases continue to provide 'banner' headlines (appendix twenty two), ultimately affecting employment in the Fire Service. Whilst the public expect firefighters to be tough and brave, they do not expect them to be 'chauvinist pigs' and the importance of this should be recognised.

The failure of the fire service and in particular management to provide for the 'dignity of women at work' has been shown in more structural terms than chapter one, although the negative effects of fire service culture, at all levels, have again been prominent. Traditionally, the fire service expects to solve its own problems and there appears to be a reliance by managers that women will 'fit in', but this is not happening. Analysis of the survey results suggests considerable harassment although to-date this has rarely become public knowledge. The lack of adequate equality training is fundamental in this context and implicates managers in harassment, a point they seem unaware of despite the moral and economic reasoning for change. However *"the extent to which the equality environment is increasingly litigious is not appreciated by managers"* (L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit, 1995. p.18) and the law may be the final arbitrator on this matter as the next chapter will demonstrate.

The Political Intervention in Equal Opportunities by the use of the law.

Equality would seem a simple thing to achieve, however, earlier chapters have shown that the almost overnight prohibition of sexism will not undo centuries of socialisation where "*gender is usually the first source of social identity*" (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990, p.28) and patriarchy still rules. Therefore this chapter will consider some relevant aspects of Sex Discrimination Law and how in a practical way this may help to effect change. This will not be a step by step guide to the law, but rather a discussion on the motivation, effects and use of equality legislation. The underlying intention will be to point out that equality is no longer a moral or economic issue alone, but one that politicians now require.

Dominant social groups of whatever kind do not yield their privilege, prestige and power voluntarily. They will manipulate their advantage to ensure that whatever changes occur remain compatible with their own continued supremacy. It is here that gender ideologies come in so handy for elite groups. If change comes about, then, it will not be automatic but will result from the political actions of the groups involved; the most salient being the state.

(Bradley, 1989, p.233-4 my underline)

Support for legal remedies to discrimination despite serious reservations about adequacy and practice is given by Palmer (1992) and Morris and Nott (1991), although Smart (1989) resists this view by considering that direct action rather than the law is a

preferred method of achieving equality. However, even her radical view-point has to acknowledged the law's importance.

Second-wave feminists may be critical of first-wave liberal feminists for their emphasis on formal legal equality, and their apparent attempts to have women admitted to the male order, and it is unlikely that we would willingly give up any of the legal reforms they achieved (Smart, 1989, p.138-9).

Sex discrimination legislation provides for equal access to most¹⁵ employment for both men and women. It also requires that once in employment women¹⁶ will be treated equally¹⁷ and with respect (Palmer,1992) but this is not a pro-active piece of legislation.

The Sex Discrimination Act, unlike the Equal Pay act, is essentially a negative and passive piece of legislation, Its aim is to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex in employment, education and in the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises. Although it permits positive discrimination in training in certain circumstances and gives the Equal Opportunities Commission the duty of promoting equality of opportunity, it does not place an obligation on employers, unions or relevant government and other institutions to take positive steps to break down segregation in jobs and to create genuine equal opportunities in employment. (Mandy Snell, 1986, p.26. my underline).

However, it must be conceded that equality law has provided an important lever to gain access to many occupations previously denied to women and provided an

¹⁵There are a few occupations that under the term Genuine Occupational Qualifications are able to deny equal opportunities in regard to race and sex and the fire service is not one of these. For further details see Lewis, 1992,p.36-7.

¹⁶] The act provides for equality for both sexes but because of the nature of this study the term women is used. However the Act does nothing to protect discrimination 'intra' sex and therefore affords no protection for harassed male firefighters as explained earlier unless they were harassed by a women.

¹⁷Equal pay forms part of the legislation but this has never been an issue for firefighters as women are employed on the same wages as men and their employment did not start until after the act was introduced.

avenue for the first women firefighter in 1982. Women's success in gaining access to this high profile, publicly respected occupation, can do much to destroy negative stereotypes concerning women's physical ability, courage and determination.

"Studies have repeatedly revealed how the attitudes of men (managers, male workers, trade unions, husbands) reaffirm gender stereotypes: women cannot do certain jobs, women are unsuitable for jobs requiring toughness and responsibility, men will not work under a women, marriages are better if a wife can stay at home" (Bradley, 1989, p.236)

Unfortunately, it is not only been to gain access that women firefighters have needed equality law. They have had to use it to protect themselves from men and this has been illustrated in earlier chapters.

Equality legislation provides a basis to control and seek retribution for minorities, like women firefighters, who find themselves isolated within an environment that is not only alien, but hostile to their presence. It is a 'popular' notion that harassment only occurs if intentional, and this is wrong. *"The intention or motive of the discrimination is irrelevant,"* (Palmer, 1992, p.23). This is an important issue, for when women firefighters are harassed under the guise of humour and fun the underlying motivation and effects are often unknown/disregarded. Patriarchal power within the fire service has been well identified and as such fire service management, itself a victim of patriarchy, has failed to recognise and act against the processes operating on such occasions. When Palmer's words are linked to earlier chapters it can be suggested that male firefighters are in contradiction with the law when *'cultural expectations are reinforced'*¹⁸.

¹⁸this would also apply to ethnic minorities under Race Relations Legislation (Palmer 1992).

Firefighters appear not to recognise they are individually liable for their actions when they discriminate, believing their employers are responsible, but the legislation is very clear.

The harasser is always liable and in many cases the employer is liable as well unless s/he took reasonable steps to prevent the employee from discriminating. S.D.A. s.41 and R.R.A. s.32 provide that anything done by a person in the course of his or her employment shall be treated as done by his employer as well as by him or her, whether or not it was done with the employer's knowledge or approval (Palmer, 1992, p.23+224. my underline).

The Tanya Clayton case (appendix fourteen) has provided ample evidence of firefighters experiencing public humiliation via the courts¹⁹. This negative example should be unashamedly put to positive use as an additional lever to change male firefighter's attitudes to women. The Fire Service can no longer be an 'ostrich', professional training has to be provided to educate firefighters that they are responsible for their actions and what their actions are.

Neither, Palmer (1992) explains is it a defence to suggest that discrimination occurred out of chivalry, or what Morris and Nott (1991) would call paternalism. An example to illustrate this is provided by *Cockroft v Restus Ltd*.

Preconceptions that people of a particular sex, marital status or race possess or lack certain characteristics are discriminatory.....In Cockroft v Restus Ltd, an IT said it was unlawful discrimination to assume that the work (as a warehouse assistant was for a 'big strong lad' and was unsuitable for a 'young lady' (Palmer, 1992, p.15)

As Palmer (1992) suggested earlier, if an employer takes all necessary action to prevent discrimination liability in harassment cases may be avoided. Judging by the results of the survey the fire service do not seem to be able to claim this. Totally inadequate equal opportunity training has been given to most of the respondents

¹⁹No damages have yet been awarded for this proven case of harassment but estimates to date range from £100,000 to £2,000,000 part of which will be the responsibility of individual officers named in the case.

(appendix nineteen) and Bucke (1994) supports this view, suggesting that some Brigades do not have any effective policy at all. The effects, once again, of Clayton should provide employers with an incentive to further their efforts. In doing so they may wish to implement the code of practise provided by the Equal Opportunities and European Commissions.

The European Commission's code sets out a number of recommendations for employers, including;

- * *drawing up and publicising a policy statement on*
- * *giving managers responsibility for the policy, both in*
- * *the provision of training*
- * *the development of clear and precise procedures;*
- * *the designation of a person to provide advice and*
- * *assistance to employees subjected to sexual*
- * *the setting up of a sensitive and prompt*
- * *making sexual harassment a disciplinary offence;*

*sexual harassment
explaining and*

investigation p

(Palmer, 1992, p.224)

Given their lack of equality training it cannot come as any surprise if firefighters have not identified their practises as illegal. Both Morris and Nott (1991) and

Palmer (1992) show considerable frustration with the laws complexity,

The British legislation has been drafted with grotesque and unnecessary complexity and obscurity---more like income tax legislation than a human rights code. It is not user-friendly. It suffers from piecemeal pragmatism and excessive detail...and by the continuing inability of some judges to embrace the concepts of equality contained in the legislation (Anthony Lester Q.C. in Palmer, 1992, forward).

and perhaps returning to Smart's (1989) advice earlier, a more direct approach may have merit.

Throughout the survey women have indicated "*putting bums on seats*" (women respondent) as the most constructive way of remedying harassment. The law can help in this direction as positive action is not illegal when seeking to redress imbalances within a workforce (Morris and Nott 1991). For *'even where the employer eliminates the source of discrimination, long-standing job segregation may discourage women from applying for a job where it is perceived as traditionally done*

by men' (Equal Opportunities Review no 14. 1987, p.13). In this area some Fire Brigades now specifically invite women recruits and London did offer pre-entry training, to level the playing field, but this created a male 'backlash'(appendix eighteen) that may have been responsible for the project ceasing (L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit 1995).

Perhaps the step by step approach adopted by equality managers, to avoid the male backlash in Cockburn (1991), would be of assistance to the fire service. As the political realities of upsetting in-toto patriarchal hierarchies cannot be underestimated. Unpleasant that this must seem, more positive action to increase women firefighters may be a step forward or may provoke a bigger male backlash. However, such men must be wary of the law, as equality legislation incorporates a small but significant change in the need to prove guilt.

Morris and Nott (1991) explain once a prima facia case for discrimination has been shown the law will *"require the respondent to prove there were other grounds for that treatment"* (Morris & Nott,1991 p.171) *"reversing the burden of proof"* (Equal Opportunity Review no.61, May/June 1995, p.2) . This suggests that the right of silence of the accused and some of the obligation to prove the sexual nature of the harassment are replaced by a need for harassers to prove they are innocent.

This is a very complicated suggestion although this has precedence in 'drink driving laws' of which we are all aware. It is for lawyers to advise²⁰ but this appears to be an important factor if women are considering court action over harassment. The tribunal in the Clayton case have used this interpretation within their judgement and they have quoted case law under the Race Discrimination Act which they consider is *"equally applicable"* (Clayton v Hereford and Worcester, 1995, Case no 27856/93, p.78)

²⁰The Fire Brigades Union provides full legal support for women and therefore the complexity of the law should not be of concern to them.

In such circumstances the Tribunal will look to the employer for an explanation. If no explanation is then put forward or if the Tribunal considers the explanation to be inadequate or unsatisfactory it will be legitimate for the Tribunal to infer that the discrimination was on racial grounds.

(King v Great Britain China Centre [1992] I.C.R. 516 my underline).

This chapter has opened a discussion on equality law and importantly some legal misunderstandings may have been corrected, especially with regard to the legality of some cultural expectations. Furthermore a sound legal/financial justification has been provided for the fire service to support equal opportunity training and policies to avoid breaking the law. This of course *should not* be their main reason for doing so. Morally women are entitled to feel safe at work and discussion on positive action has shown how in concert with other measures women's harassment at work may be reduced.

Summary

This study of the politics of gender has provided a clear insight into how 'men at work' can deny equality to women. The choice of the fire service to demonstrate this in practical terms paralleled by a study of authoritative writers has proved successful. A paper has been produced which assists in the understanding of the politics of gender in an academic sense, whilst retaining such grass roots practicality that the fire service will find it useful. This duality was a paramount motive, as was the desire to provide a pilot for further

research. The primary research, two thirds of which has not been produced within this paper, but provided an rich empirical background, was an essential part of this task and the computerised data is available for future use.

Fire service culture has been portrayed throughout as a central 'actor' within the fire service and is responsible for the positive effect of producing tenacious firefighters with the necessary bonds of trust and loyalty, at all ranks, essential for such a dangerous occupation to function efficiently and safely.

However, as the culture has been investigated several negative practices have emerged which are not to do with firefighting per se but more to do with control of the work environment and inter-personnel relations between firefighters. The survey has shown that negative cultural practices have been used by male firefighters specifically against women. Sometimes to force them to leave the fire service, and on other occasions to ensure that those that do stay, emulate the macho image of a firefighter. What has been identified is that through the systemic organisation and perpetuation of male power the fire service has produced an image of firefighting as a macho pursuit, carried out by 'real' men who have to be 'tough' to be successful. Whilst this may have an element of truth with relation to the ideal of a 'tough' firefighter, no argument has been found to suggest that 'toughness' is purely a male preserve. What has been suggested though, is that the very 'macho' image created has little to do with toughness but more to do with control, bullying and preserving the fire service as an area of employment where women will not flourish.

This has not been entirely successful and many women have shown more 'toughness' by surviving the rigours of male harassment than they may reasonably be expected to do in fighting fires. There would be many in the fire service that would argue that this is precisely the role the culture has in this regard; to in fact build men out of boys, or in this case out of women. This argument is as outdated as other traditions that have been exposed within the fire service and there appears to be a direct correlation between

firefighters, or at least how the culture has traditionally established the 'nature' of a firefighter, and the worst excesses of patriarchy. Traditions that have by some hidden hand prevented, to date, neo liberal policies and the Equal Opportunities Commission from investigating and changing.

Amongst these outdated traditions is the outdated and ineffective management structure. Chapter two has illustrated this clearly by showing how inept management have been in adopting an effective equal opportunities policy. By failing to do this managers have exposed women to harassment through simple structural processes such as communal washing and changing facilities and by posting them singularly to stations. Furthermore, by not training firefighters adequately, if at all on equality issues, they have *implicitly supported* harassment. This has led to a higher rate of women's resignation, 62% of women respondents acknowledging they have been harassed and several high profile industrial tribunals. Notwithstanding this, the research has indicated that harassment shows no sign of even slowing down, let alone stopping.

Stop it must though and the final chapter explains how equality law effects the fire service and how blatantly this factor has been ignored. This has been done to indicate how men should be aware of their responsibilities in the workplace regarding their relationships with women. Perhaps fundamental to the whole dissertation has been the suggestion that men do not seem aware of their actions, when they too are indoctrinated by patriarchal cultures at work.

The Fire Brigades Union at leadership level and some individual fire service employees are the only men that have 'survived' this dissertation with any credit. They have demonstrated that men do not have to be part of the negative cultural processes existing within the fire service. This provides concrete evidence that male power is not a natural phenomenon but a politically negotiated hegemonic male discourse. That in the fire service maintains power through the negative processes of the culture.

This study should not end here, for it has only pointed to a cause of harassment and how in some ways harassment may be avoided. As a pilot this dissertation has identified the positive and negative affects of fire service culture and it is important that this research should continue. There now needs to be a prolonged and extensive academic study carried out into fire service culture. The survey and interviews, that have been a major contributor to this dissertation, have shown that this is possible. Such a study should aim to achieve a greater understanding of how cultural effects may be realigned to maintain the essential positive qualities needed for firefighting whilst reducing negative outcomes to make the fire service a more egalitarian, efficient and economic organisation.

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Appendix One Primary Research; Methodology.

The need to carry out primary research to provide qualitative and quantitative data was identified in March of 1995. Women firefighters are spread over the whole of Britain and taking advice from Moser and Kalton a postal survey of all full-time women firefighters seemed the most appropriate route for this research to follow. *"Sometimes the population to be covered may be so widely and thinly spread, and the funds available so limited, the mail questionnaire is the only feasible approach"* (Moser and Kalton, 1971,p.257). A postal survey had the added advantage of providing privacy for respondents to answer many of the personal questions involved in the questionnaire.

The Questionnaire (reproduced at end of this appendix)

The decision was made to cover the fullest possible range of questions despite the warning from Moser and Kalton (1971) that this may reduce response rates, for the following reasons;

- * a fuller background for the dissertation would be more useful than just qu
- * access to all women firefighters was unlikely to be 'open ended' and too much info
- * any further research to be carried out could be 'piloted' by such a wide survey.

A draft questionnaire was produced in April and a pilot survey was carried out with three women. Their comments were considered and a second draft questionnaire was produced. The questionnaire was also given to a lecturer for comments, but unfortunately due to sickness this did not occur.

Distributing the Questionnaire

Contact was established with the Fire Brigades Union and an interview arranged at the Head Office, Kingston on Thames for the 20th of April 1995. At this interview the questionnaire (in draft form) was left for comments as to suitability, and to establish if the Fire Brigades Union would agree in principle to circulate it to their members.

A letter was written to the Fire Brigades Union on the 12th June 1995 to ascertain if a decision on the principle of circulating the questionnaire had been made. The reply indicated that the questionnaire had been circulated that day to all women firefighters. Whilst the questionnaire did cover all the questions required, it had not yet been produced in computer friendly form. This added considerably to the difficulties experienced in placing the data on computer. However, this was not the fault of the Fire Brigades Union whose help was essential in the production of this dissertation, but my own for not emphasising the draft nature of the questionnaire in my follow-up letter.

Copies of the questionnaire were sent to all full-time members of the Union (140) and 36 (25.7%) were eventually completed. However, only 26 were the product of the union's 'mail-shot', the remainder I have delivered by net-working women firefighters; all whom had not received the original questionnaire. The union have been informed of this and they are aware their mailing list, entirely dependant on the individual member for accuracy, is out of date. Importantly in the case of women this may occur because women do not wish to declare their change of address.

The survey has shown that 41% of respondents had partners who were firefighters and this may have affected the number of women who actually received the questionnaire. Women who are in partnerships with firefighters may be concerned about informing any official body of such relationships, as fire brigades have an in/formal policy of transferring partners who work together. In an attempt to improve the return I had a letter published in the Firefighter Magazine, however, this received only one response.

A 25% return is just below the 30-40% return expected by Mc Neill (1990, p.40), but replies were received from 24 of the 33 Brigades that employ full-time women firefighters. This data has been produced as table ten to indicate how many women are actually employed in each brigade and how many replies were received. It can be identified from this table that some brigades are shown as actually employing no female firefighters and yet responses from these brigades to the survey have been received. This occurs either because the Home Office statistics are incorrect or more likely because women have been employed since 1994.

The following points should be considered when looking at table ten

- * for six brigades the response rate was 100% (key *), this could rise to 100%
- * for five brigades the response rate was 50% (key +);
- * the London Fire Brigade contains over one third of women firefighters

- * twenty four brigades out of the thirty three that employ women are
- * distinctive patterns in the qualitative/quantitative data from all areas

repres
of Brit

TABLE TEN

NAME RETURNS ACTUAL (as in 1994 Annual report of equal opportunities joint committee of the central fire brigades advisory councils 1994)

NOTTS		1		3
BEDFORD		1		4
SHROPSHIRE		1 *		1
DEVON		1 *		1
TAYSIDE	1 *		1	
LINCS	1 +		2	
HEREFORD AND WORCEST		2 +		4
HERTFORDSHIRE		1	0	
LONDON		7	56	
DERBYSHIRE		3		7
CAMBS		3 *		3
STAFFORDSHIRE		1		4
WEST YORKSHIRE		1 +		2
SUFFOLK		1	0	
DUMFRIES		1		0
LANCASHIRE		1 +		2
LAXEY IOM?	1		0	
WEST GLAMORGAN		1	0	
EAST SUSSEX		1 *		1
DYFED		1	0	
SURREY		1 *	1	
NORTHANTS		1 +	2	
DURHAM COUNTY		1		0
AVON		1		5

Reflexive view of data input and analysis

Despite having achieved a first in 'research methods' this module had not included inputting data to S.P.S.S. for DOS and it was necessary to obtain manuals on the programme to establish how this was achieved. Work commenced on this project in July. This academically challenging process was entirely wasted when I arrived

to enter the data and found that the college had updated its programme to S.P.S.S. for Windows. This setback proved even more difficult because no help was available at the Cambridge site, where the staff had no understanding of the new programme and no manuals were available. Aided by an 'in house' booklet, which proved only marginally useful, and the 'help' programme built into S.P.S.S. the data was eventually placed onto the computer over a period of four weeks.

The lack of manuals became even more important when the data was analysed as no way of extracting the qualitative evidence could be found. Having failed once again to get any assistance at Cambridge, and following several telephone calls a meeting was arranged with a computer lecturer from Chelmsford early in September. At this meeting it became apparent that the programme would not analyze my qualitative input. Therefore all the qualitative data had to be transferred to a word processor and this was completed by mid October.

The analysis

The data was summarised and a complete print out of all variables produced. This has provided a considerable background for the research and justified all the efforts in placing data onto the computer. The data referred to in the dissertation, less than one-third of the total, has all been analyzed and 'written up' in the form of appendices, but the additional data has only been examined for background information (but is available if required). No cross tabulations have been introduced into the dissertation for the following reasons;

- * a preliminary cross tabulation of several questions showed no
- * the amount of work involved in cross tabulating was considered

Interviewing.

Interviewing was carried out in "*unstructured*" (Kane, 1985, p.64) form, and those with official representatives were taped (*).

List of interviews.

20th April*	Comrade	Full time officer F.B.U.
20th April*	Roger	Executive Council Member F.B.U.
13th May	Sid	Male Firefighter
13th May	John	Male Firefighter
7th October	Jane.	Women Firefighter.
7th October	Carole.	Women Firefighter.
3rd November	Colin	Male Firefighter
3rd November	Tony	Male Firefighter
8th January*	Chris.	Uniformed Equality worker L.F.B.
8th January*	Joe	Civilian Head of Equality Unit L.F.B
9th January	Marie.	Ex chair L.W.A.C.
9th January	Dinah	Women Firefighter
Several interviews	Janet	Women Firefighter

Additional qualitative data

four visits to fire stations to confirm my experience of the fire service as current.

20th. April 1995. Day spent at F.B.U. head office.

8th. January 1996. Day spent at Equality Unit.

9th. January 1996. Attended meeting of the L.W.A..C.

All the data that has been produced within the dissertation has been checked to ensure anonymity. (* indicates removal of words to maintain anonymity)

Questionnaire.

Length of service.....

Rank.....

Age

Name of Brigade..... or if you do not like to give its name indicate type of station you serve on.----rural-----major city-----large town-----

Number of stations served at and length of time.....

Reason for transfer.....

Results at fire service exams

recruits course probation.....promotion exams sat and result

Age on leaving school

Education level.....

Your previous occupation/s

Parents occupations.....

Grandparents occupations

brothers and sisters occupations.....

Where did you find out about a career in the fire service (*please circle*)

family----- friend----- newspaper----career advisor----- other please specify

.....

Did the programme London's Burning influence your decision to join, please comment

.....

How many times did you apply.....

When you applied to join the fire service were you living (*please circle*) ----at home-----.

with a friend ----- with a partner

Did your family support your application.....

Did your partner support your application.....

Why did you join the fire service

.....

.....
.....
Has the fire service lived up to your expectations please
comment.....

.....How many women
firefighters are there in your Brigade including you
when you started ; now.....

How many other women on your watch.....; station.....

If another women was to be posted to your station would you feel please circle.---
pleased --- resentful

Comments.....
.....
.....

Does your union provide a women's network.....

Locally do you use it? ---- some of the time---- all of the time---- not at all

Nationally do you use it? ---- some of the time ----all of the time---- not at all

how does it function and any comments
.....

Would you consider yourself an active union member

Do you hold a formal position in the union if so what is it

Has your **Brigade** organised a women's network

do you use it (*please circle*) ----- some of the time ----- all of the time ----- not at all
how does it function and any comments

.....

Do your male colleagues support the idea of women's networks.....

.....

Do you see yourself as

at work (*please circle*) ---- extremely feminine ----- feminine ----- surrogate male-----I don't
consider myself as adopting any gender role.

away from work

(*please circle*) -----extremely feminine ----- feminine ----- tom boy----
I don't consider myself as adopting any gender role-----

Do you consider you experience a more difficult time at work because you are a women (*please
circle*) -----all the time ----- some of the time----- made no difference

Comments.....

.....
.....

When you started did you feel your male colleagues accepted you
in trainingat the station

Have they accepted you now.....

Becoming a firefighter is very difficult every body experiences problems please list problems you may have experienced in practical or technical work.....

.....
.....
.....

Do you have adequate ---- changing ----- washing facilities please comment

.....
.....

Have you received any formal equal opportunity training

Brigade; how many occasionstotal time.....is it ongoing.....

was it ----useful---- mediocre---- unproductive

Comments.....
.....
.....

Union; how many occasions..... total time

was it ----useful ---- mediocre ---- unproductive

Comments.....
.....
.....

What would **you** consider important points for equal opportunities training to cover

.....
.....
.....

Did your training cover these.....

Should equal opportunity training be please circle----- single sex-----sometimes mixed -----
mixed all the time

How do you find the culture / sense of humour within the Fire Service.

During first year; (please circle)----Difficult to handle ---- I adopted it because it was the easiest way -----because I wanted to -----I fought against it and failed / succeeded / its an ongoing battle -----I found it suited me.

After first year (please circle)----Difficult to handle ---- I adopted it because it was the easiest way /because I wanted to ----- I fought against it and failed / succeeded / its an ongoing battle ----I found it suited me.

Comments
.....
.....
.....

Do you socialise with work colleagues (please circle) in the pub after work ----at other times

Has the fire service changed your life style socially please comment
.....
.....

How **did** you see your role as a firefighter---- surrogate man ----- women

How do you see your role **now**.....

Are you happy with this please comment
.....

Do you consider your Brigade at a senior level supports the concept of women firefighters.....

Do you consider your Union supports the concept of women firefighters.....

Have you ever been harassed at work

During first year (please circle)-----frequently ---- occasionally -----on odd occasions-----never

After first year (please circle)-- frequently ---- occasionally -----on odd occasions--never

If you were harassed what form did it take?

.....
.....
.....

How did you deal with it.....

.....

Was any of this harassment of a sexual nature.....

Comments. no details required just the severity in general terms

.....
.....
.....

How did you deal with it

.....

Would you recommend women friends to join the fire service.....

How would you see the best way to influence other women to join the fire service.....

.....
.....
.....

How would you like the fire service to change to assist the inclusion of women

.....
.....
.....

Do you have a partner, if so what is their occupation.....

Do you have any children, if so has this caused any problems

.....

Would you describe yourself as a feminist.....

Do you expect to complete your full pensionable service.....

Appendix Two Statistics from Home Office

TABLE TWENTY NINE Italics represents my analysis

Firefighters enrolling and leaving fire service (not through retirement)

93-94	men enrolled	878	=96%	left through resignation	129	=14.6%	
	women enrolled	30	=4%	left through resignation	10		=33.3%
94-95	men enrolled	962	=95.7%	left through resignation	85	= 8.8%	
	women enrolled	43	=4.3%	left through resignation	8	=18.6%	

Statistics from C.F.B.A.C. 1994

Appendix Three Equal Opportunity Staff and Units.

Approaches to equal opportunities

Bucke (1994) classified two approaches to equal opportunities in the nine brigades he researched. One approach noted was to appoint a dedicated equal opportunities staff and this was undertaken by four brigades, who had "*clearly gone beyond creating a good paper exercise*" (Bucke, 1994, p.13). The other five brigades had delegated equal opportunities policy to employees with other responsibilities resulting in "*a situation where the policy becomes marginalised. Such a position sends a message to other staff about senior management's true level of commitment to the policy*" (Bucke, 1995, p.14).

Bucke did not identify which of the brigades came within each group, so no direct comparison with the survey and the outcomes this provided for women firefighters can be suggested (any further research would need to establish from Bucke the names of the brigades involved and cross tabulate them with the data on harassment from this survey to ascertain if there is a direct link between equality

approaches and harassment). However, as London was one of the brigades that Bucke researched it would be reasonable to believe that this brigade came within the scope of the first approach, and their equality unit was visited to identify good practice in operation.

Training within London.

To provide basic equality training for firefighters equality staff are visiting each station within the brigade. Given the size of the brigade this had been ongoing for three years and still had not covered all the one hundred and thirty stations. It is suggested that such limited training will be insufficient to change such a culturally bound workforce, and any positive effects achieved from single visit will be swiftly undone if not reinforced regularly. If this is what Bucke considers going beyond a paper exercise, then how bad must the situation be in the Brigades adopting 'other approaches'.

The interviews

The level of commitment of the two equality staff interviewed was clearly high, and they illustrated a considerable understanding of the problems involved. However, Cockburn(1991) suggests that notwithstanding the level of commitment of equality officers and probably because of such commitment they suffer from considerable stress and burnout due to marginalisation (A letter was written to ascertain the turnover of staff and when no reply was received. I telephoned the head of unit who had not had time to reply to my letter, perhaps this suggests an answer in itself). On leaving at the end of the day I had a distinct impression that the unit suffered from marginalisation and this would follow Cockburn's argument. The reason may have been lack of support from senior management, which one of the interviews clearly identified, but it was my opinion that lack of funding created the more serious problem.

The London Fire Brigade is suffering from a reduction in government grant and proposals were being discussed at the time to achieve a 10% cutback in firefighters. Clearly given the cultural expectation of the fire service that 'the job must get done', when budgets are cutback equality funding will feature less importantly than retaining firefighters. This will be even more important now that the equality unit is part of a Home Office inspired 'value for money' audit and as such has to provide financial reason for its very being. Within the dissertation the argument of how equality measures can provide for economic efficiency is considered and explained.

Staffing

London's equality unit has seven full-time posts committed solely to equality matters, headed by a non-uniformed manager. However, the unit was in the course of reorganisation and three positions were vacant. This was not a 'cut-back' as management were debating the benefit of filling the vacancies with professional

staff rather than uniformed officers. Bucke (1994) considers that senior uniformed staff in such posts symbolises a commitment by brigades to equality issues, but he also recognises that professional 'civilians' can bring considerable expertise to this field .

This is a dilemma for the fire service as few uniformed staff, if any, have yet received sufficient training and experience of equal opportunities to efficiently undertake such work. Moreover equality officers would need to be of senior rank and such career officers would be unlikely to stay in post for more than two years. This would create serious continuity problems and possibly be economically unsound due to high level of training that would be required to provide such officers. There is a further problem with the use of uniformed officers in a service that holds equal opportunities in low regard and has a hierarchal management structure.

An equality officer should be pro-active ensuring that equality issues are considered in all policy decisions, and Cockburn (1991) suggests their role is often considered 'troublesome' by senior management. Therefore career officers, who are 'passing through' an equality unit on route to further promotion, are unlikely to oppose principle officers over equality issues as these principle officers will be their judges at promotion boards.

On balance the employment of civilian equality officers seems to offer the best opportunity for satisfactory results, but there is a problem that must be understood if this is done. Within the fire service everyone without a uniform is considered an outsider, 'who doesn't know what the job entails'. Therefore breaking through the 'cultural barrier' (fully explained within the dissertation) would pose difficulties for civilians and they must be chosen with this cultural effect and limitation in mind.

However, without professional equality staff, uniformed or not, the fire service cannot expect to understand equality issues or provide adequate training for firefighters and this dissertation will provide evidence that suggests neither are being achieved.

Appendix Four London Women's Advisory Committee and Helpline.

The London Women's Advisory Committee is a sub-committee of the London Regional Committee of the Fire Brigades Union. This was established following pressure by women union members in London to provide an opportunity for women to discuss their problems. It has assumed prominence as a voice for women firefighters nationally, and advises on women's issues to the London Region through a non-voting member. I attended one of their meetings and this presented an opportunity to talk with women firefighters afterwards.

The committee runs democratically, but informally, carrying out much of its work through out-reach grass roots contact. There was frequent talk of telephone calls between members and recognition of family events and it became clear that this committee consisted of members who would be welcoming to anyone with a problem. Indeed the very fact that I was made welcome was warming for me in itself. It was not difficult to recognise many, if not all, of the traits that Lovenduski

and Randall (1993) saw as prominent within women's committees organised by feminists in the 1980's. *"Feminists, committed to democratic, anti-hierarchical, and consultative ways of working"*(Lovenduski and Randall, 1993, p.152).

The committee, however, experiences considerable criticism as separatist. A fact that appears untrue as any union member, male or female, is welcome to attend meetings. Perhaps more importantly, and like the previous criticism an example of lack of male understanding, the London Women's Advisory Committee is accused of having too much status for such a small membership. These criticisms appear unfounded and without such a committee the essential network of support for harassed women would not occur. Furthermore, this committee has been responsible for raising a number of women only questions which regard to their uniforms that are designed to fit men, maternity leave, abortion and harassment. The committee's ability to function and the high profile it achieves in such a male environment shows, in practical terms, how much the F.B.U. leadership are prepared to support women firefighters. From this committee women are provided with the support and the sympathetic understanding needed when they contact the 24 hour helpline.

The 24 hour helpline, provided by the Fire Brigades Union, ensures that women who are experiencing problems at work can seek confidential assistance from other women and the union guarantee that no action will be taken on any complaint without the prior agreement of the caller. Simple counselling up to full scale legal assistance are available from this service, and the union are considering making the line available to all members.

Appendix Five Occupations

The occupations respondents held before entry into the fire service have been divided into four groups in table eleven. Only two women had prior experience of manual labour, three were employed in child care, nine had physically demanding occupations in sports and nineteen had occupations that were clerical or technical. Further information from the survey provides the occupations of grand parents, parents, and siblings (This data has not been analysed but may provide a pattern of family background for women firefighters and as such indicate groups of women who could be 'targeted' to improve recruitment levels)

TABLE ELEVEN

manual labour

VARIED ALL PRACTICAL BARMAID WAITRESS DRIVER GARDENER BRICKLAYER.

POSTWOMAN WORKED ABROAD BUILDING SITE OFFICE WORKER VAN DRIVER LEATHER FACTORY WAITRESS BARMAID.

child care industry

CHILD MINDER TELEPHONIST HOUSEWIFE.
CHILD MINDER WAITRESS.
PLAY GROUP SUPERVISOR 1 YEAR PARENT.

sports industry

WATER SPORTS INSTRUCTOR AND SKI INSTRUCTOR.
GYM INSTRUCTOR WAGES CLERK.
BRITISH HORSE FED A/INSTRUCTOR TRAINED POLO PONIES ENGLAND AND AUSTRALIA.
TEACHER RIDING INSTRUCTOR BAR WORK.
AGRICULTURE EQUITATION.
FITNESS INSTRUCTOR.
SPORTS ATTENDANT REDCOAT LIFEGUARD LABORATORY ASSISTANT LIFEGUARD.
SPORTS TEACHER.

clerical and technical

QUALIFIED TEACHER. CIVIL SERVICE STUDENT.
COLLEGE/PART TIME SHOP WORK.
DUTY MANAGER LEISURE CENTRE.
TEACHER ART PROBATION SERVICE PART-TIME YOUTH WORKER.
TRAINEE QUANTITY SURVEYOR.
MANAGER AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANT.
LABORATORY TECHNICIAN.
EVENTS MANAGER AND TRAVEL TRADE.
CROUPIER / SELF EMPLOYED/ SALES ADVISOR.
PHARMACY TECHNICIAN.
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT WITH PUBLISHING COMPANY.
CIVIL SERVICE/E.S.J. OFFICE WORK LITTLE WOODS.
OWNED EMPLOYMENT AGENCY.
NONE.
WAITRESS/ASS CATERING MANAGER.
TRAINEE BAR AND RESTAURANT MANAGER.
CHEF.
SELF EMPLOYED SOFT FURNISHING BUSINESS. INFORMATION OFFICER B.I.M.

Appendix Six

Difficulties at work:

Table twelve suggests that only two women considered they experienced no difficulties with technical and practical work, whilst the remainder had problems; seven in more than one area. Twelve women found strength a problem and six admitted to working on this. Technical difficulties created problems for twelve women and the gender divide at school and in socialisation generally is recognised by eight of these. Study created difficulty for six of the women.

Despite the question not asking about cultural problems ten women took the opportunity to raise difficulties that can be classified as such. This is important as

the women have not been lead in that direction and therefore their responses can be considered of significant value. This suggests already, before the issue of culture has been raised with the women, they are sufficiently concerned/aware of the cultural effects within the fire service to raise this issue. This spontaneous suggestion of difficulties in this area will support the suggestion concerning the validity of later posed direct questions on fire service culture and harassment especially where women suggest they enjoy the culture marginalising the fact that the very same culture has given them problems.

Table thirteen provides quantitative evidence that 27.8 % (10) of the women considered their gender/sex created no difficulties at work whilst the remainder ranged between the 11.1% (4) who considered being a women presented a problem all of the time and the 61.1% (22) who had gender difficulties some of the time.

Table fourteen (page 58) indicates that nineteen of the twenty one qualitative respondents experienced problems because of their gender. Looking more closely it has been identified that eighteen of these women (key +) are suggesting acts of sexual discrimination against them. This question is not about harassment per se but the high incidence of unsolicited answers in that context has significance and will provide considerable support for the suggestion that harassment is widespread throughout the fire service. The question was not designed as a 'tester' to corroborate by the use of a veiled question, harassment, but the fact that it has done so is important. The answers interpreted in this manner hold close resemblance to the qualitative and quantitative data on harassment.

TABLE TWELVE

Question: Becoming a firefighter is very difficult, every body experiences problems. Please list problems you may have experienced in practical or technical work.:

Key.

- +cultural difficulties (10)
- ^strength difficulties (12)
- \$study difficulties (6)
- ~technical difficulties (12)

\$ In practical it was not a problem but I have not studied for a long time

\$ The theoretical side just so much information it takes time.

\$ Not so much have problems with the practical and technical but the amount of it to learn understand and remember it is important to keep on top of it.

\$ A lot of written work to fit in 20 weeks of training.

\$ Learning to study again after a long absence from studying

\$ Study, running in steel soled toed wellies!

^ ~ Physical: up ending hook ladders. The technical took practise. Technical: Understanding pumps-not helped by the fact that most instructors didn't understand them either so couldn't help.

- ^~ Obviously strength has to be worked at. Technically very difficult subject for myself not very technically minded at all
 - ^~ I had to work on building up arms to carry ladders with confidence. I have to keep working to remembering all technical data my ladder climbing isn't very good at the moment.
 - ^~ I had problems with roofing ladders in particular, I do some circuit training which has helped I have realised there is a definite technique also technical I've never had anything to do with mechanical things so the workings of the pump for example baffled me at first.
 - ^~ Women are biologically less strong (on average) than men. I have to work hard at the gym to maintain upper body strength. I also need to catch-up in general knowledge at car mechanics!!
 - ^~ A lot of technical terms to learn. Hard work physically because of small build
 - ^~ I do find that I lack in upper body strength compared to the men and also the boys tend to be more mechanically minded which helps!!!
 - ^ Upper body strength, I now train regularly to keep up to strength
 - ^ Problems initially with upper body strength
 - ^ I think most women suffer a little on upper body strength, we have to train harder to improve that
 - ^ Upper body strength injury to both legs
 - ^ Practically only downfall upper body strength but always achieved what was needed
- + Great difficulty stagnant culture can undermine your confidence, which undermines your ability and performance. Its acknowledged women not as strong as men determination negates this difficulty brute strength a small part anyway women lots to offer if allowed only few special women succeed once accepted blossom
 - + Generally I feel that as a female I have to do better than average male to be accepted as regards the practical side. Technically you either know it or learn it or you ***
 - + As all my previous learning, thinking and way of life had been right hemisphere it was very difficult to change at 29 to left I don't think I succeeded.
 - + Some men tend to be unknowingly patronising some men find it hard to handle a women being present so tend to pretend your not there. As a women when you have made yourself known they tend to relax a little.
 - + Men are not to willing to let you learn too much
 - + Is becoming a firefighter very difficult my main difficulty was understanding boys club culture and why so many people had such low expectations of women
 - + Lack of confidence as the spotlight is always on you
 - + Having to be a better all rounder than the best on the station
 - + Always having to prove oneself
 - +~ Assumption that I have used power tools and thinking I'm thick because I have not. More problems with other peoples attitudes
- ~ Some technical/mechanical problems which I feel stem from not doing practical subjects at school/college. We had to do needlework home economics and child care etc.
 - ~ Preliminary difficulties in technical work due to inexperience when techniques are learnt with experience the practical work becomes easier

~ I have found things on an engineering basis more difficult to learn and may have taken a little longer due to non engineering background what so ever either at school or college other than that I have had no real problems

~ Complete lack of experience with mechanical and technical equipment. i.e. tool kit even

~(^)Manual dexterity doesn't come naturally to me. Background info such as building construction baffles me.

I am a practical person and some of the technicalities seem pointless

I have not had any practical or technical problems

TABLE THIRTEEN

Question: Do you consider you had a more difficult time because you are a women

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cum Percent	Percent
ALL OF THE TIME	1	4	11.1	11.1	11.1
SOME OF THE TIME	2	22	61.1	61.1	72.2
MADE NO DIFFERENCE	3	10	27.8	27.8	100.0
	-----	-----	-----		
Total	36	100.0	100.0		
Mode	2.000	Valid cases	36	Missing cases	0

TABLE FOURTEEN

Comments on question

BEING SHORTER NOT SO STRONG

ON THE RECRUITS COURSE IT SEEMS TO MAKE NO DIFFERENCE

FOR MY SELF NO DIFFERENCE BUT I KNOW IT CAN BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR SOME WOMEN

+ THEY CAN BE A BIT OFF WITH ME BUT IT ISN'T A PROBLEM

+ AT FIRST THE BLOKES WERE NOT SURE IF I WAS UP TO CERTAIN TASKS NOW IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE

+ I HAVE FEWER PROBLEMS NOW THAN AT FIRST

ONLY IN THE BEGINNING WHEN THE LADS DIDN'T KNOW ME. THE WATCH I AM ON ARE

+ NOW SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS BUT SOMETIMES AT INCIDENTS WE MEET OTHER WATCHES AND ****

JUST A FEW JOKES BUT ALL IN GOOD HEART

+ AT TRAINING SCHOOL I FELT THAT SOME INSTRUCTORS WOULD PREFER ME NOT TO BE THERE

- + NOT ON MY OWN WATCH BUT SOMETIMES WHEN I AM DETACHED TO OTHER STATIONS
- + ONCE AGAIN IT DEPENDS ON THE SITUATION AND TO WHO YOU ARE RELATING TO AT THE FIRST STATION I WORKED AT I EXPERIENCED MANY PROBLEMS AND ALIENATION DUE TO THE FACT I WAS A WOMAN I EVENTUALLY WAS ABLE TO TELL SOMEONE AND SORT OUT THE PROBLEMS
- + MORE TO PROVE AND BEING ACCEPTED BY BLOKES FROM OUTSIDE MY WATCH WITHOUT INFORMED OPINIONS
- + ON LAST WATCH YES ON NEW WATCH NO
- + FOR SOME OF THE TIME MY STATUS WAS AS SOMETHING OF A ZOOLOGICAL SPECIMEN AND THERE WAS A CONSTANT PRESSURE TO PRESENT NOT MYSELF BUT ALL WOMEN IN THE BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT
- + I FEEL SOMETIMES I HAVE TO ALMOST DO BETTER THAN THE MEN TO BE EQUAL IF THAT MAKES SENSE
- + EVERYBODY SEEMS TO BE WATCHING YOU ALL OF THE TIME IF A BLOKE MADE A MISTAKE IT WOULD JUST BE LAUGHED OFF AND CORRECTED BUT IF I WAS TO MAKE ONE IT SEEMS AS THOUGH THEY THINK TYPICAL OF A WOMEN USELESS
- + IF ONE PERSON SAYS DO YOU DO THE SAME AS THE MEN OK WHEN 30 PEOPLE SAYS IT GETS A BIT WEARING CONSTANT BOMBARDMENT OF CAN YOU DO IT EVENTUALLY DENTS ONES CONFIDENCE. ONE COMMENT FROM ME AND I'M A BAD TEMPERED BITCH. SOME MEN DON'T AGREE WITH WOMEN FULL STOP
- + IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW YOU HANDLE YOURSELF YOUR POSITION, TIME IN, ETC. AS TO JUST HOW DIFFICULT IT IS MADE YOU ARE OFTEN LEFT TO FIGHT YOUR OWN CORNER AS VERY FEW MEN WOULD OPENLY SUPPORT YOU MAINLY FROM UNWANTED ATTENTION FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC
- + PEOPLE WATCH YOU MORE ESPECIALLY IN SUCH AREAS AS STRENGTH AND REACTIONS TO CERTAIN SITUATIONS
- + I FEEL THAT PEOPLE WATCH ME MORE CLOSELY SUBSEQUENTLY I FEEL I HAVE TO DO TWICE AS WELL AS THE MEN TO BE CONSIDERED EVEN HALF AS GOOD!!
- + WOMEN JUDGED AGAINST PERFECTION, MEN AGAINST AVERAGE PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR AND APPEARANCE SCRUTINISED
- + AS RACIST AND SEXIST AS REST OF BRITAIN ACCEPTED IF YOU ARE TOUGH ENOUGH TO BE WHAT YOU ARE *****

Appendix Seven Education

Table fifteen indicates that only 2.9% of women had no formal qualifications with 64.7% of the women having achieved higher than G.C.S.E. education and 20.6% have degrees. The high standard of education of these women could be a reflection on the type of women who would have answered the questionnaire but even taking this into account and assuming that every women in the country with a degree answered, then this would mean that 5% of women firefighters have degrees. Whilst no data is provided, nor available from any source, concerning male firefighters, my own experience indicates that this result would not be replicated for men. In thirty one years I only met five firefighters with degrees and ten with A levels. This suggests that women are over-qualified for the fire service in comparison with the men. Faludi (1992, p.397) suggests in 1991 women were earning only 70% of the male wage and this corresponds with figures provided by the equal opportunity commission. So taking into account job security, conditions of service, the shift system, pension scheme (see National Joint Council Conditions of Service) and more importantly the salary an explanation may be provided for this situation.

Table sixteen and seventeen suggest the fire service presents an opportunity to earn a higher income than women would normally expect. The high starting rate as a firefighter almost equals women's expected average income in non-manual occupations and is considerably greater than any salary expected in manual occupations (table seventeen). This may give some indication as to why women of high education are drawn to the fire service. However, a significant amount of qualitative data is available, from the survey, to investigate this matter should the need arise in the future. Data is also available to identify women's rate of success in achieving promotion, but this has not been analysed as women's low numbers and lack of time in the service would make this exercise insignificant at this stage. However, at a later date this evidence may be important to provide a longitudinal comparison.

TABLE FIFTEEN **Question: Educational level.**

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cum Percent	Percent
NO FORMAL EXAMINATION	1	1	2.8	2.9	2.9
GCSE OR EQUIVALENT	2	12	33.3	35.3	38.2
B.TECH.	3	4	11.1	11.8	50.0
A LEVELS	4	10	27.8	29.4	79.4
DEGREE	5	7	19.4	20.6	100.0
.	2	5.6	Missing		

Total	36	100.0	100.0		
Valid cases	34	Missing cases	2		

TABLE SIXTEEN **Rate of pay for firefighters, not including London Weighting.**

Period of service	salary per week in £
first six months	252.68
after six months	264.07
during 3rd year	276.72
during 4th year	290.41
during 5th year	316.23
after 15 years	330.32

(Firefighter, December, 1994)

TABLE SEVENTEEN Average weekly earnings

	Manual occupations	Non-manual occupations
Men	£274.3	£418.2
Women	£177.1	£266.7 (Equal Opportunity Commission 1994)

Appendix Eight**Promotion**

Promotion in the fire service up to Station Officer is achieved by examination and interview.

RANK	QUALIFICATION
Leading firefighter	Minimum two years service Written one day technical examination Practical examination Successful Interview
Sub Officer	Minimum four years service Written two day technical examination Practical examination Successful interview
Station Officer	Minimum five years service Three day technical examination Successful interview

Promotion above this rank is achieved by interview.

There is no fast track for promotion and each rank has to be achieved before applying for a more senior position. There are significant faults in a system of promotion that ensures all officers have started their career as firefighters and these are listed below.

all officers will have been subjected to the negative affects of fire service culture, especially sexism and racism;

on promotion officers take with them a history of their own misdemeanours. This will make them sympathetic and vulnerable to the lower ranks when they try to discipline them for actions they themselves have been guilty of in the past and therefore unlikely to stop bad practises even if they recognise them;

it will prevent/reduce graduate entry;

promotion is too slow for enterprising workers.

Lack of graduate entry ensures that few officers have formal training for their intellect and this results in a lack of academic reasoning for many officers. It is significant in this context that the fire service is considered an essentially practical occupation with little respect for

academia. Promotion criteria for junior rank is dependant on being 'a good practical firefighter' and without achieving this rank further promotion is unavailable. The fire service has not yet realised that large organisations, as in the case of The London Fire Brigade employing up to 8,000 employees with a proposed budget for 1966-7 of over £268 million, may not produce effective managers from within their own ranks.

When this effect is coupled with the limitation that a disciplined hierarchy imposes by ensuring that officers of senior rank ' who always know best' can stifle innovative thinking by junior ranks or outside influences, it is surprising that the fire service continues to run so effectively. However, this dissertation will argue that this is not so, but this will pose an important question that any reader may ask. How has the fire service has escaped 'neo liberal' intervention for so long if it is so badly managed?

There is perhaps a simple answer, firefighters are the public's friend and as such hold enormous public support and this makes any notion of intervention a political 'hot potato'. The unique nature of fire service culture ensures that at times of public scrutiny firefighters, their officers and the Fire Brigades Union all bind together to prevent or cloak investigation. An example of this can be seen in how public and political support is mobilised to prevent job losses, with money always being found at the expense of other local services (see Cambridge Evening News, 30-1-96), and politicians at government level have never asked why.

Even the Fire Service Inspectorate at the Home Office comprises of ex Chief Officers who have all started life as firefighters. Further research by students interested in the role of networks linked by culture would find the fire service an interesting case study.

Appendix Nine**FIREFIGHTERS DUTIES**

Firefighters duties are divided into two parts, the operational and non-operational. In many industries this division would be understood as separate occupations, but they are not, they run concurrent. This situation is historical, established when firefighters lived on fire station for up to three weeks without leave. This ensured that firefighters, like a ship at sea, provided for all their needs (perhaps unwittingly the fore-runner of the Neo liberal flexible worker). Few firefighters enjoy non-operational work 'as this is not what real firefighting is about' and this secondary status denigrates its importance.

operational

The work that the public normally understand as the duties of a firefighter and involves fire fighting, road traffic accidents and almost any call of help from the public. The amount of emergencies a fire station deals with depends very much on 'its' location and can vary from 6,000 a year to 250. However, even on the busiest stations there is a considerable period of time spent not attending emergency calls.

non operational

This work occupies time that firefighters spend not attending emergency calls. Some of this work such as fire prevention duties, drilling, preparing equipment and lectures can be considered to be essential to the efficiency of the fire service. However, it is not always designated as such by firefighters and there is considerable resentment to fire prevention work, and what firefighters would perceive as 'unnecessary' training. Pressure from firefighters frequently intimidates officers into not carrying out an adequate programme of activities and this leaves firefighters with 'time on their hands'. Left to their own devices it is at these times the culture promotes its negative effects. Firefighting is by its 'nature' a physical job and involves considerable stress. The very fact that the day is spent waiting for 'the bells to go down' creates tension amongst such a highly active group and this is relieved by 'horse play' or 'winding someone up' which can be both verbal and physical.

Appendix Ten Changing/Washing facilities

The survey indicates that 78.8% and 75% of the women are happy with their changing and washing facilities respectively (table twenty two/ three). But it is difficult, when one reads the ethnographic replies (table twenty four), to understand why. One woman points to the advantage of 'information exchange' that occurs in the locker room and this could be important. Firefighters spend a lot of time in their locker room and to exclude women from this location would perhaps raise other difficulties.

However, if the first time a woman is posted to a station, before she has even met her watch, she has to change amongst an all male audience a very clear insight into the structural processes that remind women (and men) of their sexuality can be gained. The new recruit cannot object, to do so would be to draw attention to her difference, yet she is different and has to display this difference to the men. The debilitating effect this can have for women in such an isolated situation, with an intense desire to become part of the team, and yet wishing for privacy should be obvious to employers. The complete lack of insensitivity by management to the processes at play on these occasions shows how uncaring management can be. It is a different matter, perhaps, for a watch who have worked together for a long time to change together, but even then this practise has sinister overtones. If fire fighters were all saints then this could be understood, but probably even saints would object to communal changing facilities.

The same arguments could be extended to the washing facilities which appear less than adequate for a profession where washing and showering are a constant feature. Each time firefighters return from an incident they need to wash/shower and this process may occur several times a day. The sharing of shower facilities and the inaccessibility of separate wash-rooms, identified from table twenty four, once again highlights how women may be forced to comply with unacceptable situations to belong to the team.

Most importantly this question has shown that the fire service has made little or no allowance for women's privacy and made it an issue rather than a norm if they seek to obtain it. This allows the suggestion that management are identifying women and men as asexual, in some mistaken belief that a lone woman will not feel intimidated changing/washing in front of men. It is difficult to perceive that women in any other occupation would accept such a lack of privacy on these occasions, and one would be interested to hear what Cockburn or Tong would have to say if

they had to do this. More importantly the fact that 77.4% of the women have accepted such facilities as adequate, supports the suggestion that will feature throughout this dissertation that women are subordinated by male power, and that this will be reflected in their answers throughout the survey. Management are not only ignoring women in this context they are actively participating in supporting women's objectification, tacitly encouraging harassment and adding to the vulnerability of women.

TABLE TWENTY TWO

Question: Do you have adequate changing facilities

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
YES	1	26	72.2	78.8	78.8
NO	2	7	19.4	21.2	100.0
.	3	8.3	Missing		
-----		-----		-----	
Total		36	100.0	100.0	

Mode 1.000 Valid cases 33 Missing cases 3

TABLE TWENTY THREE

Question: Do you have adequate washing facilities.

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
YES	1	24	66.7	75.0	75.0
NO	2	8	22.2	25.0	100.0
.	4	11.1	Missing		
-----		-----		-----	
Total		36	100.0	100.0	

Mode 1.000 Valid cases 32 Missing cases 4

TABLE TWENTY FOUR

COMMENTS ON WASHING AND CHANGING FACILITIES

key + = communal changing facilities

+ STATION BROOM CUPBOARD 3 FLOOR. DOWN IN BAY SHOWER IN L.F. ROOM MEANT LOCKING L.F. OUT. DO NOT THINK SHARED IS AN EASY MIX
 + MY LOCKER IS IN THE DORMITORY, I HAVE A TOILET AND SINK AND USE THE COOKS LOO, BUT IT IS USED BY ALL
 +OWN SHOWER AND TOILET BUT CHANGE AND SLEEP WITH EVERYBODY ELSE
 +I HAVE A SEPARATE TOILET AND BASIN I GET CHANGED IN THE MAIN DORMITORY BUT I COULD USE THE TOILET IF I WAS BOTHERED
 +OWN SHOWER AND TOILET LOCKER IN AREA WITH MEN
 +POLICY OF FACILITIES FOR ALL. STILL SOME STATIONS NEED IMPROVING CHANGING IN MIXED LOCATION SHOULD BE CHALLENGED AND NOT GOOD PRACTISE ANYWAY
 +ALL SHARED
 +I HAVE MY OWN TOILET AND SHOWER BUT CHANGE MOSTLY IN THE LOCKER ROOM WITH THE OTHERS
 +I HAVE TO CHANGE IN THE SAME CHANGING ROOM AS THE MEN AND MY SHOWER IS THE SUB OFFICERS SHOWER, LOCK JUST FITTED
 +I HAVE MY OWN TOILET FACILITIES WITH WASH BASIN. TO SHOWER I USE ONE OF THE TWO LOTS OF MEN'S SHOWERS, A LOCK HAS BEEN FITTED TO THE DOOR SAME CHANGING FACILITIES
 + CHANGING FACILITIES ARE COMMUNAL ---BUT I PREFER THIS FOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE OPPORTUNITIES AND I DON'T WANT A WOMEN'S GHETTO
 + SHARE WITH MEN FEMALE TOILETS TOP FLOOR

1 ONLY TOILET ON GROUND FLOOR MALE. UPSTAIRS IS CLEAN AREA WHEN I AM DIRTY HOW CAN I GET UP TO WASH. ASKED FOR CHANGE REFUSED FOR THE FIRST YEAR I DID HAVE NONE BUT NOW I GOT A CHANGING ROOM COMPLETE WITH SHOWER AND TOILET ADEQUATE BUT NOT GOOD.
 I HAVE FEMALE TOILET AND SINK BUT SHOWERS ETC. ARE FOR MALES AND I HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL ITS EMPTY!
 AS LONG AS ONLY FEMALE ON WATCH
 NOT ON ALL STATIONS
 DISGUSTING AT OTHER STATIONS
 I SHARE A SHOWER WITH EITHER STATION OFFICER OR L.F. WHICH BECOMES DIFFICULT SOMETIMES
 AM HAPPY WITH THEM
 WE DO HAVE NOW BUT THESE WERE NOT IN PLACE WHEN I JOINED
 SEPARATE LOCKER ROOM KEY TO LOCK SHOWER ROOM
 YES THERE ARE ONLY THREE OF US
 I HAVE A SHOWER ETC. AND ALL MY MALE COLLEAGUES HAVE.
A LOCK ON THE SHOWER DOOR CHANGING ROOM IS THE TOILET OTHER STATIONS WHICH I VISIT ON STAND BY HAVE LESS THAN THIS
 ADEQUATE IS ABOUT RIGHT FOR BOTH BUT IT COULD BE A LOT BETTER I HAVE A SMALL SHOWER ROOM WITH A TOILET THAT EVERYONE USES AND THE SHOWER RARELY WORKS PROPERLY
 NOT FOR FIRST TWO YEARS I HAD TO EXPEND A LOT OF EFFORT IN GETTING A PLACE FOR US TO SHOWER WITHOUT INCONVENIENCING THE MEN

AT THE MOMENT MY LOCKER IS IN THE TOILETS AND I HAVE SHOWER FACILITIES IN A SEPARATE PLACE. THIS IS BEING LOOKED INTO AND SHOULD CHANGE SOON HOPEFULLY!

SEPARATE TOILET, BASIN, SHOWER (BUILT FOR ME ONCE STATIONED

Appendix Eleven Harassment

From table twenty eight the quantitative data suggests the majority of the women have been harassed [twenty three (63.9%)] with four of them considering they were harassed 'frequently'. When the qualitative data from table thirty is analyzed the harassment ranges from misplaced humour to physical assault, however, all may constitute illegal harassment (see chapter three). Whilst most of the harassment has been verbal, this is not any excuse and the last lengthy example shows how damaging such abuse can be. This degree of qualitative information was not requested and the fact that it was given seems a cry for help. In fact it took all of my academic discipline, as a researcher, not to forward this case to the union. However, this provides a perfect example of how fire service culture in its worst form operates against women. This particular women's experience is mirrored in many of the shorter responses and indicates how male behaviour is so clearly linked across Britain. The similarity of responses not only to this question but to other questions will provide a body of support to the argument that the survey has provided a substantive picture of how women are experiencing life as a firefighter.

From table thirty one it can be identified that none of the respondents pursued a formal complaint against their harassers, despite the continuing harassment that some of them are experiencing. Twenty of the responses indicate that some of the women are confident and powerful when approaching harassers(table thirty one key=+). However, the research has not identified at what stage in their service this was achieved and how far the harassment

had got before they reacted. The remainder do not have such confidence and the approach suggested in chapter two, to empower women and their supporters to speak out against harassment, appears worthy in this context. One positive trend is noticeable, three of the women have received support from male firefighters (table thirty one key = x). This could be the start of an opening of male culture for women and these men would need to be identified in further research where their comments could be invaluable.

Data obtained from the Home Office (appendix two) does indicate that more women than men are resigning in percentage terms. Figures are only available for two years, so no long term trends can be identified. Interviews with these women and a sample of the men may provide the greatest insight to harassment in the fire service and attempts should be made in any further research to do this.

TABLE TWENTY EIGHT

Question: Have you been harassed at work

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
FREQUENTLY	1	4	11.1	11.1	11.1
OCCASIONALLY	2	19	52.8	52.8	63.9
NEVER	3	13	36.1	36.1	100.0
	-----	-----	-----		
Total		36	100.0	100.0	

Mode 2.000 Valid cases 36 Missing cases 0

TABLE THIRTY

Question: Comments on sexual harassment. No details required just the severity in general terms

DEGRADING SEXUAL COMMENTS

PHYSICAL CONTACT

NO COMMENT!

CHOOSE NOT TO COMMENT

VERY SEVERE

IN FIRST YEAR BAD AND BULLYING NOT VERY WELL I DID NOT USE FORMAL PROCEEDINGS I HAD NO ONE I COULD TRUST TO HELP ME

INDIRECT SEXUAL COMMENTS ABOUT WOMEN BUT OBVIOUSLY DIRECTED AT ONESELF

AT TRAINING SCHOOL ONE RECRUIT WAS GROSSLY OFFENSIVE

TOUCHING PINCHING REMARKS PIN UPS MILD BULLYING POWER ABUSE IGNORED

VERBAL ABUSE SUBORDINATION HUMILIATION DERISION SEXISM ETC. GENERA

SHIT NOT ALL MEN.

THE PERSON IN QUESTION ***** WAS VERY CHAUVINISTIC KEPT REFERRING TO WOMEN'S DUTIES AT HOME IRONING ETC./ MY HAIR CURTAINS FLOWERS IN FIRE STATION

***** DID NOT KNOW CORRECT WAYS TO BEHAVE COULD NOT INTEGRATE AND ADAPT TO WOMEN AND DISCRIMINATION SEE TRANSFER

VERBAL ABUSE HAIR CUT NOT LET OFF THE PUMP AT INCIDENT SET UP ON

FUNCTIONS PRACTICAL JOKING

BULLYING

MENTAL COMMENTS WHEN NOBODY ELSE IS IN EAR SHOT BITCHING Titillating

TRYING TO PUT ME DOWN

VERBAL

ONE TRAINING SCHOOL INSTRUCTOR SEEMED TO GET A KICK OUT OF PUSHING ME HARDER THAN THE OTHERS AND PATRONISING ME

SUGGESTIVE COMMENTS

JUST VERBAL REALLY SOME PEOPLE DON'T HIDE THE FACT THAT THEY DON'T AGREE WITH WOMEN IN THE FIRE SERVICE SOME JUST GO OUT THEIR WAY TO IGNORE YOU OTHERS DON'T GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO PROVE YOURSELF

VERBAL SEXIST COMMENTS USUALLY JUST TO SEE IF THEY CAN GET ME GOING

BUT THAT IS THE FIRE SERVICE HUMOUR THEY WILL PICK OUT ANYTHING IF IT

GETS YOU FIRED UP

NAMES JOKES COMMENTS REMARKS

MAINLY SEXISM i.e. HUMOROUS JOKES OR REMARKS WHICH I FIND OFFENSIVE

ONLY IN HUMOUR

FOR FIRST TWO MONTHS 2 PEOPLE TALKED TO ME WHAT IS HARASSMENT I KNOW

BUT DO OTHERS WHAT IS GOOD NATURED PISS TAKING

NOT SEVERE AT ALL THE LAD WHO WAS LEFT ON THE WATCH WHO HELPED WAS

VERY SUGGESTIVE. AT THE TIME HE WAS THE ONLY ONE TO TALK TO ME SO I

IGNORED IT . IT MADE ME FEEL VERY UNCOMFORTABLE I MADE IT QUITE CLEAR I

WAS NOT INTERESTED

CONTINUED A RITE OF PASSAGE SHOULD NOT HAVE TO PUT UP WITH IT CAN COST

THEIR SANITY AND CAREERS I TRY TO FRIGHTEN THEM BACK

I REALISED THAT THE PERSON INVOLVED IS NOT OF A STABLE MENTAL LEVEL AND

HE LIVES IN A FANTASY WORLD BUT THESE WERE QUIET EXTREME I'D KNOWN HIM

FOR THREE WEEKS

THERE'S BEEN APPROACHES BUT I WOULDN'T CALL IT HARASSMENT

JUST THE SAME AS ANY OTHER HARASSMENT BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

JUST COMMENTS ON THE FEMALE FORM!

SUGGESTIVE COMMENTS

ONLY IN FUN

DURING FIRST YEAR JUST VERBAL FROM THE ODD MAN.

Additional comments from one case

For the first few months everything seemed to run smoothly I felt reasonable happy. The watches attitude then changed towards me, no one would help with my probation and slowly I became isolated ***** Generally they would get up and walk out of

the rooms when I walked in, sometimes it would go quiet. If they cooked I was never asked if

I wanted a meal. I was not invited out socially and they would lie to prevent me finding out. I

was constantly put down and made to feel inadequate and pushed out during training, I lost

an awful lot of confidence, No one would help me learn and I heard a firefighter make a

comment about me twice that would be detrimental and I suspect it happened a lot more.

For a 15 hour night I could sit in a room and no one would come to speak to me. Some of

this may sound petty but when you are a minority and it continues day in day out for a long period of time it gets very distressing *****. I tried to tell the junior officers but it was pushed under the table.

TABLE THIRTY ONE

Question: How did you deal with the harassment.

x+SPOKE STRONGLY TO PERSON CONCERNED SOUGHT ADVICE FORM SUB OFFICER NON OFFICIAL

x+THIS WAS NOT BY A UNIFORMED MEMBER OF STAFF TRIED TO BE LOW-KEY AND REASONABLE BUT FIRM THIS DIDN'T WORK I USED A COLLEAGUE TO ENFORCE MY NON-INTEREST I WOULD NOT MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT THOUGH

x+WE ALL WENT TO THE PUB AND LAUGHED AT HIM

+WHEN YOU GET PUSHED YOU PUSH BACK AND WHEN SOMEONE PISSES ON YOU, YOU SAY SO, YOU DON'T PRETEND ITS RAINING

+IGNORED IT

+SPOKE IN CONFIDENCE WITH THE PERSON IT INVOLVED

+EACH ON ITS OWN BASIS AND DEPENDANT ON MY POSITION WITHIN THE AUTHORITY AT THE TIME SOMETIMES I IGNORED IT OR LAUGHED IT OFF OR RETALIATED OR GOT ANGRY VERY DEPENDANT ON THE PERPETUATORS POSITION AND THE VENUE ON MY OWN TURF I'M STRONGER

+I IGNORED THE PRAT AND ROSE ABOVE IT

+I TOOK IT AT FIRST THEN WHEN WE WERE ALONE I DEALT WITH IT VERBALLY BUT CALMLY

+MADE IT CLEAR I WAS NOT INTERESTED

+JUST LAUGH IT OFF GET ON WITH THE JOB AND PROVE YOU CAN DO IT. DEFINITELY DON'T BITE BACK YOU'LL JUST GET RESENTED

+DEPENDS ON THE PERSON I GIVE THEM BACK WHAT THEY GIVE SOMETIMES JUST IGNORE THE PERSON

+IGNORED IT ALL

+MAINLY BY USING HUMOUR BACK AT THEM TO BELITTLE THEM

+ I SPOKE TO HIM AND TOLD HIM IT WOULD GO FURTHER IF HE DID NOT STOP

+IGNORED MOST OF IT, DID THE SAME BACK!

+MADE CLEAR I WAS NOT INTERESTED

+FRIGHTEN THEM BACK

+I DO NOT ENCOURAGE ANY INTEREST AT ALL ;BY NOT COMMUNICATING WITH HIM IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCE

+IGNORED MOST OF IT SOMETIMES INDIFFERENT

+TACTFULLY

TRIED TO IGNORE IT STUPIDLY GOT TO ME AND ENDED UP HAVING SICK LEAVE WENT ON FOR 5 YEARS

DETACHMENT NEVER REACTING KEEPING QUIET RESULT WAS NEARLY SACKED FOR ATTITUDE TO DISCIPLINE BLOKES THOUGHT I CARED NOTHING FOR THE JOB I DID NOT I DID NOT FEEL THEN THAT I HAD THE BACKUP TO CHALLENGE HIM IF YOU KEEP DEALING WITH IT AT LOW LEVELS STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF YOU CAN KEEP ON TOP OF THINGS BUT SOMETIMES THE ENDLESS PETTY EXAMPLE OF BIGOTED ATTITUDES GRIND YOU A BIT RAW YOU JUST HAVE TO BE TOUGHER TRYING TO TALK TO THE INDIVIDUAL ABOUT IT THIS ALWAYS FAILED I JUST LET IT PASS IN THE HOPE THAT IT WOULD NOT HAPPEN AGAIN

Additional comments from one case.

Not very well to begin with I had no one to turn to. I spoke to the station Officer who spoke to the junior officer (union rep) on my watch who told me 'I was not being harassed' He spoke briefly to the watch nothing changed.

Eventually a equal opportunity union rep **** heard about it from *****. I had an interview with***** and it was agreed *****.

* No action taken as it was an informal complaint. I felt this to be the best for my future in the brigade *****

Appendix Twelve Time Out

Appendix Thirteen Company of other women

Table twenty five indicates that only one respondent works with another women. The quantitative data from table twenty six indicates that twenty two women (68.8%) would be 'pleased' if another women were posted to the watch, and that ten (31.2%) held reservations, including one woman who suggested she would resent this. However, the

qualitative data from table twenty seven suggests eighteen women could identify problems or had reservations about having another women on their watch. This suggests a disparity with the quantitative data. This result may have been caused by women having ticked the 'pleased' box realising, on reaching the qualitative reply, the consequences of another women working with them and how male firefighters would react to this. In one interview the woman, although fiercely in favour of equality was reluctant to see another woman on her watch, a feeling she could not justify. After further analysis of the data it is suggested this contradictory effect may have occurred because;

- * Women may be ashamed for another women to witness their treatment at the
- * They may be afraid of the comparisons men will make to identify weaknesses in
- * They may feel that having 'carved' a space within male culture by complying they do not want it upset by another women;
- * Women may actually not care if another women was posted to their station;
- * Women may enjoy the 'status' they have as the token women.

hand
wom
with "

This ambiguity between the qualitative and quantitative data needs to be resolved in any further research. The questionnaire has in fact failed to provide an accurate basis for answering this question, concerning the company of another women on the station, and further research would need to ensure that the suggested possibilities were bought out and answered. However, should the negative conclusions be correct then these answers indicate the serious position women have been placed in by management in posting them singularly on watches and the debilitating effects of this action.

TABLE TWENTY FIVE

Question: How many other women on your watch.

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
0	34	94.4	97.1	97.1	
1	1	2.8	2.9	100.0	
.	1	2.8	Missing		
Total		36	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 35 Missing cases 1

TABLE TWENTY SIX

Question: If another women was posted to your station would you feel; pleased, resentful.

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cum Percent	Percent
PLEASED	1	22	61.1	68.8	68.8
RESENTFUL	2	1	2.8	3.1	71.9
UNBOTHERED	3	4	11.1	12.5	84.4
BOTH	4	3	8.3	9.4	93.8
NOT SURE	5	2	5.6	6.3	100.0
.	4	11.1	Missing		
Total		36	100.0	100.0	

Mode 1.000 Valid cases 32 Missing cases 4

TABLE TWENTY SEVEN

Comments on question

THERE HAVE BEEN TWO GIRLS, ONE STARTED ON A DIFFERENT SHIFT BUT AT THE SAME TIME THE SECOND TRANSFERRED IN AFTER ABOUT SIX MONTHS SERVICE BUT HAS SINCE MOVED ON
INDIFFERENT THEY ARE ALL FIREFIGHTERS WHETHER MALE FEMALE BLACK WHITE I WOULD FEEL LIKE SOMEONE NEW HAS TURNED UP
I WOULD FEEL NO DIFFERENT THAN I DID WHEN OUR LATEST MAN WAS POSTED IT WOULD DEPEND ENTIRELY ON WHAT SORT OF PERSON SHE WAS
I WOULD REACT EXACTLY THE SAME AS IF IT WERE ANYONE ACCORDING TO WHETHER I LIKED THEM OR NOT OR KNEW THEM GENERALLY I FIND I LIKE PEOPLE SO ID PROBABLY BE PLEASED
WOULDN'T BOTHER ME
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME WHO I WORK WITH AS LONG AS THEY ARE CAPABLE BUT THE *****
I DON'T GO FOR GIRLS STICK TOGETHER SO COULDN'T CARE LESS THERE ARE 2 OTHERS AT MY STATION AND UNFORTUNATELY I DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE ONE OF THEM ANYWAY IT *****
NEITHER, SHE SHOULD BE ADEQUATELY ABLE TO DO THE JOB AND HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE, IF NOT I WOULD FEEL IRRITATED BY HER
IT WOULD DEPEND ON WHAT SHE WAS LIKE IF SHE FITTED IN AS LONG AS THEY DON'T EXPECT TO BE TREATED ANY DIFFERENTLY FROM THE MEN
I'M NOT SURE IT WOULD DEPEND ON HER ATTITUDE AS IT WOULD WITH A NEW MALE RECRUIT
ALTHOUGH I AM NOT A FEMINIST IT IS GOOD TO SEE THE ODD FEMALE AROUND I WOULDN'T WANT HER ON THE SAME WATCH
= I FEEL WE WOULD BE COMPARED TO EACH OTHER PERHAPS PUTTING MORE PRESSURE ON US
= I WOULD NOT BE PLEASED I WOULDN'T RESENT HER I WOULD RESENT THE GAME OF COMPARISON WHICH WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY ADOPTED

= IT WOULD SET THE MALE FIREFIGHTERS OFF EVEN MORE AND IT TAKES A LOT OF TIME TO GET THEM USED TO IT. IT MIGHT MAKE THINGS WORSE FOR MYSELF ESPECIALLY IF THEY WERE NOT UP TO STANDARD. IF THEY WERE ANY GOOD IT MAY BE A GOOD IDEA

NOT SURE I SUPPOSED I'D HAVE TO GET ON WITH THEM WELL AS IT COULD MAKE THINGS VERY DIFFICULT OTHERWISE

WOMEN MORE CRITICAL OF EACH OTHER THAN MEN

I WOULD HOPE SHE WOULD GO TO ANOTHER WATCH SO SHE CAN LEARN TO STAND ON HER OWN FEET FROM THE START I WOULD GLADLY HELP AND ADVISE HER BUT YOU HAVE TO MAKE THE INITIAL BREAKTHROUGH ON YOUR OWN MERIT BEING THE FIRST WOMEN I HAD ALL THE PROBLEMS TO SORT OUT I WAS A GUINEA PIG THE NEXT ONE WOULD HAVE IT EASY BECAUSE I FEEL I HAVE PAVED THE WAY PROBABLY BE DIFFICULT WITH ONE AS I'VE FOUND. 20 OR MORE ON ALL WATCHES GREAT

PEOPLE GIVING JOBS ARE STILL A LITTLE UNSURE IF 2 WOMEN SHOULD BE ON THE SAME WATCH WHICH IN MY OPINION IS PATHETIC

+ THE MORE VARIETY OF PEOPLE THE BETTER

+ NEITHER OR PERHAPS TO BE MORE HONEST INITIALLY BOTH BUT REALLY THE SEX/GENDER ISSUE IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE CHARACTER OF THE PROBATIONER AND THEIR DEGREE OF COMPATIBILITY WITH THE WORK AND EXISTING WORKFORCE.

+ PLEASED BUT NO MORE THAN I WOULD BE IF ANOTHER MALE FIREFIGHTER JOINED

MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME

+DEPENDS ON THE FIREFIGHTER IF THE FEMALE WAS FRIENDLY AND ENTHUSIASTIC I WOULD BE VERY HAPPY

+I WAS NOT EITHER REALLY BUT IT WAS QUITE NICE TO HAVE THE NOVELTY OF BEING ONLY FEMALE REMOVED

+AT PRESENT ONLY 1 FEMALE PER WATCH NEEDS AT LEAST 2 PER WATCH

+I TRULY BELIEVE THE MOST ADVANTAGEOUS WAY FORWARD IS TO HAVE BUMS ON SEATS I AM AWARE THAT JUST BECAUSE WOMEN WORK TOGETHER DOESN'T MEAN THEY GET ON. I'VE BEEN THERE BUT IT DOES RELIEVE THE ISOLATION AND ATTENTION RECEIVED. THE TOKENISM NEEDS TO BE COUNTERED WITH A COMMITMENT TO 50/50 WORK FORCE

+ITS GOOD TO GIVE WOMEN A CHANCE IN THIS CAREER I FEEL THEY CAN BRING A DIFFERENT ANGLE TO THE WORK

+ITS GOOD TO TALK TO SOMEONE WHO REALLY DOES KNOW HOW YOU FEEL

+IT WOULD GIVE THE MEN ON STATION A WIDER INSIGHT TO WOMEN IN THE JOB

+IT WOULD BE GOOD TO HAVE A KINDRED SPIRIT AND EXCHANGE IDEAS

+WOULD GIVE ME SOMEBODY TO TALK TO ALTHOUGH I CAN TALK TO MY COLLEAGUES SOME THINGS I WOULDN'T REALLY DISCUSS WITH MEN

+WHEN I WORKED AT ***** THERE WAS ANOTHER WOMAN I WORKED WITH SHE HAD RELATIVELY FEW PROBLEMS COMPARED TO MYSELF BUT DID NOT SUPPORT ME I +THINK IT IS GOOD TO HAVE ANOTHER PERSON OF THE SAME SEX TO BE ABLE TO TALK TO IF NEED BE

+WOULD DO MY BEST TO ENCOURAGE AND IF IT WAS SOUGHT SUPPORT I WOULD NOT ASSUME THAT THE OTHER WOMAN WAS HAVING PROBLEMS

Appendix Fourteen

Industrial Tribunal Case Number: 27856/93 Folio Number: 06S/021/077

Applicant Tania Clayton

Respondents Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade, Sub-Officer Perkins, Sub-Officer East.

"The unanimous decision of the Tribunal is that the applicant's claims against all respondents succeed" (Industrial Tribunal Judgement 27856/93, 1995, p.1)

The Tanya Clayton case provides an insight into harassment and discrimination that will probably result in exemplary compensation. The judgement is made over 112 pages and this is available if required but due to size is not submitted within this dissertation. Throughout, the report is a damning indictment of how,

- * a male working environment is able to continually harass women;
- * the fire service has failed to adopt equality training for firefighters or
- * the lack of control senior officers hold over their stations;
- * the lack of support for women from senior officers.

The catalogue of events shows how almost from her first day at work the fire service set out to reject Firefighter Clayton (nee Jones), even to the extent of calling her fireman in written reports. Significant in the findings are the way in which men were able to change a 24 years old women who had served with the army in Northern Ireland for five years and *"was not, prior to this, a type of person to see discrimination lurking around every corner"* (Doctor Gillian Mezey M.B.B.S. M.R.C.Psych Consultant in, Industrial Tribunal Judgement 27856/93, 1995, p.31) into a women who is physiologically damaged, possibly beyond repair. *"Certain attitudinal changes she has experienced may be irreversible, in particular pervasive feelings of injustice, loss of trust, suspiciousness and persistent vulnerability"* (Doctor Gillian Mezey M.B.B.S. M.R.C.Psych Consultant in, Industrial Tribunal Judgement 27856/93, 1995, p.29).

This dissertation has not set out to make dramatic evidence out of the acts of male misbehaviour that cause harassment, for that would have been too easy. This intention has not been changed because of the tribunal findings. However, in adopting this approach no attempt is made to hide the actions of male firefighters, for they are there within the 'findings' to be seen. However the tribunal summed up an impression of witnesses and this is reproduced to provide substance to many of the suggestions within the dissertation. Any reader of this dissertation who has the intention of carrying out further research or gaining an incite into actual harassment should read the whole report.

17 THE TRIBUNAL'S IMPRESSION OF THE WITNESSES

Station Officer Shutt was an impressive witness, objective, sensitive, meticulous, and thoughtful. He thought very carefully about the questions put to him, He always ensured that he was not mis-quoted on his earlier evidence when being questioned b counsel, He had everything to lose and nothing to gain by his testimony. The Tribunal have placed great reliance upon his testimony, and accept it in its entirety.

Appendix Fifteen Sense of humour/culture

Table eighteen indicates that the majority of women (58.8%) feel that the sense of humour/culture in the fire service suited them during the first year. This figure rose in the second year to 69% (table nineteen), but the number remained the same, affected by five extra missing cases and this represents those women that have not completed more than one years service. One of the women who had 'fought against' the sense of humour/culture in her first year of service had 'adopted it' by her second year. This change of attitude would be crucial for any further study to focus on to identify why this occurred. If this was an acclimatization process, then all is well and good. However, her reluctance to acknowledge the humour/culture 'suited' her by the second year suggests possible intimidation by 'cultural police' and this practise is unacceptable.

The qualitative data (table twenty) suggests a confusing mix of feelings and does not actually follow the quantitative data. Only three women had not had any problems with the culture/sense of humour. Therefore when the qualitative data is considered alongside the quantitative it suggests that assimilation is not the only problem. To find that 31% of women are not 'suited' to the humour/culture in quantitative terms is disturbing enough, yet to find this figure completely upset by qualitative responses, that suggest at least on occasions, all but three of the women have had problems suggests an underlying bigger predicament. Important in this context are the comments within appendix six that suggest at least ten women were experiencing such difficulties with the culture they sought to raise them when not asked.

Overall, however, the data suggests most of the women have socialised or been socialised into the group atmosphere well. This does not necessarily suggest that women are treated as equals, nor with respect, and the data on harassment substantiates this suggestion; but as Herbert (1994) would be quick to confirm it is for the individual woman to make her own decision. However, that decision has to be made freely and not out of an acceptance that harassment is inevitable. One central underlying theme of this dissertation argues that

women will have their judgements affected by the environment they are in. To support this argument the dissertation argues that cultural effects figure prominently in the harassment of women, and yet so many women appear to enjoy and accept the culture. This promotes the argument on the paradox of fire service culture which can be both supportive of the firefighter and yet at one and the same time be responsible for some very negative effects. This question will be of key importance in any further research and these results will prove an important 'pilot' for such research. The anomalies raised by the data and analysis have shown that interviews rather than questionnaires will be more likely to provide a substantive answer. This was not carried out at this stage because of lack of funding and time restriction.

One last point for further research to look at is how women who are being harassed are able to suggest they are happy with the culture that harasses them, compares with and fits into other areas of women's lives. There may be a strong link with women firefighter's behaviour under these circumstances and wives who are battered by their husbands. Connell and Hammersley amongst a host of writers suggest that women internalise problems in violent marriages and that women react to blame themselves for the beatings they receive. This could be how some women firefighters are behaving.

" It became necessary to help women understand that their own experience of male violence was not just their individual bad luck or even their fault, but that there is an objective social basis for this private violence by men against women and children. This meant that they had to understand the sociological and historical dimensions of male violence if they were to get out of the masochistic tendency to attribute the failure of their marriage to their own failure as women" (Hammersley, 1993.p.77)

TABLE EIGHTEEN

QUESTION: How did you find the culture/sense of humour in first year?

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum		
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
DIFFICULT TO HANDLE	1	7	19.4	20.6	20.6	
I ADOPTED IT	3	4	11.3	11.7	32.4	
I FOUGHT AGAINST IT	4	1	2.8	2.9	35.3	
ITS AN ONGOING BATTLE	6	2	5.6	5.9	41.2	
IT SUITED ME	7	20	55.6	58.8	100.0	
.	2	5.6	Missing			
		-----	-----	-----		
Total		36	100.0	100.0		
Mode	7.000	Valid cases	34	Missing cases	2	

TABLE NINETEEN

QUESTION: How did you find the culture/sense of humour after first year

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum		
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
DIFFICULT TO HANDLE	1	2	5.6	6.9	6.9	
I ADOPTED IT	2	5	13.9	17.2	24.1	
ITS AN ONGOING BATTLE	6	2	5.6	6.9	31.0	
IT SUITED ME	7	20	55.6	69.0	100.0	
.	7	19.4	Missing			
	-----	-----	-----			
Total	36	100.0	100.0			
Mode	7.00	Valid cases	29	Missing cases	7	

TABLE TWENTY**COMMENTS ON CULTURE**

I COULD CIRCLE ALMOST ANY OF THOSE RESPONSES (APART FROM THE SECOND).

IT VARIES DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION GENERALLY THE GOOD-NATURED HUMOUR IS ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT BUT SOMETIMES THERE IS A MALICIOUS HIDDEN AGENDA MASQUERADING AS 'JOKES', WHICH I WONT PARTICIPATE IN DURING THE FIRST YEAR I FELT AN OUTCAST SO FELT I COULDN'T JOIN IN EVEN IF I WANTED TO.

FOR THE FIRST 7 OR 8 YEARS I ALMOST PRETENDED TO BE SOMEONE ELSE. WITH CONFIDENCE I STATE IF SOMETHING OFFENDED ME. I WAS PUT IN MY PLACE AND NEARLY LEFT. I NOW HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO STICK UP FOR MY SELF AND MY BELIEFS.

HUMOUR MOST OF TIME OK BUT I FIND MY SELF CHALLENGING PEOPLE ON OCCASIONS, PICK ON A BIT AT A TIME. NOT ALL OF THE WATCH ARE STEREOTYPE TRADITIONAL MALES.

I HAVE VERY MIXED FEELINGS SENSE OF HUMOUR LIKE MINE EXCEPT PREJUDICES AGAINST WOMEN GAY BLACK AND BIGOTRY. CONTEMPTUOUS STEREOTYPES DON'T SUIT ME AT ALL, BUT I APPROVE THE GENERAL WAY OF LAUGHING AT EVERYTHING AND BEING DIRECT THAT TYPIFIES THE BRIGADE. I WAS A NERVOUS WRECK AT WORK BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS LIVING AWAY FROM MY REGULAR DOMICILE UNWILLINGLY COULD NOT SETTLE IN AS THEY WOULD NOT ALLOW IT.

THE MEN TEND TO STICK IN GROUPS AT TIMES

SURPRISED BY GENERAL LEVEL OF PREJUDICE BUT DO NOT TRY TO PREACH JUST IGNORE IT

HUMOUR i.e. DIRTY JOKES, I SOMETIMES FIND OFFENSIVE AND HAVE FOUGHT AGAINST IT

I FOUND IT TOOK TIME TO BE ACCEPTED AND ALMOST AS THOUGH THEY WERE WANTING ME TO FAIL SO IT COULD BE SAID I TOLD YOU SO !!

I ADOPTED IT BECAUSE IT WAS THE EASIEST WAY

YOU CANNOT BE AN INDIVIDUAL AS A FIREFIGHTER SO YOU HAVE TO ADOPT THE FIRE SERVICE MENTALITY AND SENSE OF HUMOUR IF WORK IS TO BE BEARABLE

I DIDN'T EXPECT FIRE SERVICE HUMOUR OR CULTURE TO CHANGE JUST TO SUIT WOMEN. I JOINED AN ORGANISATION WHICH HAS DEVELOPED OVER MANY YEARS AND I WANTED TO BECOME A PART OF IT

I WAS SHOCKED AT FIRST BUT FOUND IT TO BE QUITE FUNNY. AS LONG AS NO ONE IS HURT AS A RESULT AT THE HUMOUR I FOUND MYSELF ENJOYING IT

AFTER LIVING IN THE OUTBACK IN AUSTRALIA WITH MEN WHO DON'T SEE WOMEN FOR MONTHS I HAVE DEVELOPED AN EQUAL SENSE OF HUMOUR AND FIND THAT MOST OF MY COLLEAGUES ARE ON THE SAME WAVE LENGTH AS ME

THE GUYS HAVE ALL BEEN GREAT ON MY WATCH AND ARE FUN TO WORK /SOCIALISE WITH

EVERY ONE IS OFFENDED SOMETIMES, BUT YOU GAIN RESPECT BY LAUGHING IT OFF AND BESIDES I GAVE AS GOOD AS I GOT!

I CAN ADAPT MYSELF TO MOST SITUATIONS / ENVIRONMENTS BUT THE FIRE SERVICE SENSE OF HUMOUR IS JUST MEN ANYWAY

THE SENSE OF HUMOUR CAN BE GREAT AND I KNOW I CAN OFTEN GIVE AS GOOD AS I GET. YOU ADAPT YOUR CAREER LESS OF AN OUTSIDER PEOPLE ADAPT TO YOU COMPROMISE IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR

I ENJOY HAVING A LAUGH THE WIND UPS I ENJOYED PRANKS AT SCHOOL/COLLEGE AND THE FIRE SERVICE HAS IMPROVED MY SICK SENSE OF HUMOUR!!

GROWING UP IN A MALE ENVIRONMENT I DIDN'T FIND IT A SHOCK. MORE SEXUALLY ORIENTED.

NONE ABOVE MOSTLY ACCEPTABLE THOUGH AS WITH ANY GROUP OF PEOPLE IN ANY PROFESSION THEY ARE GOING TO BE SOMETIMES UNACCEPTABLE

I ADAPTED EASILY TO THE CULTURE SENSE OF HUMOUR I THINK THE REST OF MY WATCH TEND TO ACT SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT WHEN I'M AROUND ANYWAY e.g. SUB OFFICER TENDS TO SWEAR LIKE A TROOPER WHEN HE THINKS I'M NOT AROUND WHICH SUITS ME IN ONE WAY YET BUGS ME SLIGHTLY

I USED TO DO A LOT OF GLIDING AT RAF AND WORKED WITH MAINLY MEN AND SO I FOUND IT EASY TO ACCEPT THE SENSE OF HUMOUR

SUITED ME FOR THE MOST PART

Appendix Sixteen

Role

TABLE TWENTY ONE

Question: How do you see your role now?

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
SURROGATE MAN	1	4	11.1	15.4	15.4
WOMEN	2	14	38.9	53.8	69.2
NO ROLE	3	3	8.3	11.5	80.8
WOMEN FIREFIGHTER	4	5	13.9	19.2	100.0
.	10	27.8	Missing		
		-----	-----	-----	
Total		36	100.0	100.0	

Mode 2.000 Valid cases 26 Missing cases 10

Appendix Seventeen

Networks

Table thirty two indicates 23.6% of the women did not know that a Fire Brigades Union women's network existed and this is surprising considering the high profile that the union place on this subject. One women pointed out that the network was started under duress (table thirty five key = ^) but this is looking back five years to a time when the union leadership seemed concerned about organising the network because of its separatist effect. However, this is in the past and the union are now more enlightened, at national level at least. The resistance by some leaders five years ago may still exist, however, and this may account for why 23.6% of the women are not aware of the network and the comments of another women in table thirty five (key #)

From table thirty six it can be seen that only four women consider they have active support from male firefighters for women's networks and table thirty seven gives

ample evidence of how women consider men feel about the subject. Without doubt the amount of men that do not actively support the network shows the split between the union's national body and the membership over the fundamental issue of equality suggested in chapter one is still very real (see table 36).

In one interview a women firefighter indicated that often the same firefighters attended equal opportunities education schools. This allows the suggestion that despite the union's hard work, in this field, they may be only repeating the message to a self-selected few. The ongoing harassment of women would indicate that this suggestion has substance. For if equality trained union members were present at harassed women's stations it would be hoped that harassment would be stopped. However, the cultural effects may be placing these male members in a difficult position and their loyalty to the male group may overcome their individual consciences.

The quantitative and qualitative data from tables thirty three to five suggests that networks are not being well supported with levels of support at 29.7% nationally and 44.4% locally. This would be positive if women were not being harassed, but the statistics in appendix eleven show that this is not true. The Union would benefit from studying these figures and looking at how they can get more and importantly different members to attend their courses. This then should gain support for the networks and equality matters in general and is perhaps the best chance the fire service has of defeating the negative effects of male culture. The issue of networks seems paramount in confronting harassment and this is supported by two interviewees. They suggested that most of the harassment cases, pursued to-date, have emanated from either the 24 hour 'help line' which is supported by these networks or women attending union equality schools. It is a sad admission, but it seems that when harassment cases achieve high profile it is only then that management will accept they are required to act and the whole dissertation has much to say about this.

However, some of the comments do suggest that five women do not want/need networks (table thirty five key = +) and one women is concerned about their political content. This is women's choice, but if the women who did not need networks could 'share' with the women who are being harassed, then some positive conclusions may occur. Furthermore, these women would need to be identified by any further research to ascertain if their statements are subjective to male power or in fact 'wholly' objective. Whichever the case their opinions would be essential and should provide sound evidence, after interview, about the process of harassment, male power and how to combat it.

TABLE THIRTY TWO

Question: Does the F.B.U. provide a network.

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Cum		
			Percent	Percent	Percent
YES	1	24	70.6	75.0	75.0
NO	2	4	11.8	12.5	87.5

DON'T KNOW	3	4	11.8	12.5	100.0
.	2	5.9	Missing		
	-----	-----	-----		
Total	34	100.0	100.0		

Mode 1.000 Valid cases 32 Missing cases 2

TABLE THIRTY THREE

Question: Do you use the F.B.U. network locally

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cum Percent	Percent
SOME OF THE TIME	1	9	25.0	33.3	33.3
ALL OF THE TIME	2	3	8.3	11.1	44.4
NOT AT ALL	3	15	41.7	55.6	100.0
.	9	25.0	Missing		
	-----	-----	-----		
Total	36	100.0	100.0		

Mode 3.000 Valid cases 27 Missing cases 9

TABLE THIRTY FOUR

Question: Do you use the network nationally

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cum Percent	Percent
SOME OF THE TIME	1	5	13.9	18.5	18.5
ALL OF THE TIME	2	3	8.3	11.2	29.7
NOT AT ALL	3	19	52.8	70.3	100.0
.	9	25.0	Missing		
	-----	-----	-----		
Total	36	100.0	100.0		

Mode 3.000 Valid cases 27 Missing cases 9

TABLE THIRTY FIVE

COMMENTS ON F.B.U. NETWORKS FOR WOMEN

= STARTED UNDER DURESS

WOMEN KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER BECAUSE WE LIKE EACH OTHER AND HAVE MANY EXPERIENCES IN COMMON THOUGH WE ARE

VERY DIFFERENT PEOPLE BUT THIS IS OUTSIDE THE FORMAL STRUCTURE
THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF OBSTRUCTION NATIONALLY TO WOMEN FROM
DIFFERENT REGIONS GETTING TOGETHER MOSTLY POLITICAL BETTER
NOW

DON'T KNOW

I'M NOT SURE

PHONE COMMUNICATION

+ I HAVE NEVER BEEN IN A POSITION TO NEED IT AND I SOMETIMES
WORRY THAT BRIGADES ARE PRODUCING POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST MEN

THERE ARE ONLY TWO OF US SO WE CONTACT EACH OTHER AS
REQUIRED ANNUAL MEETING A LIST OF NUMBERS OF FELLOW FEMALES I
CAN CONTACT

ALL THE WOMEN MAINSTAY OF 5 ARE ACTIVE IN THE UNION CAN BE
EXCLUDING AND OF LITTLE INTEREST

+ I DON'T REALLY KNOW I JUST GET ON WITH MY JOB AND SORT ANY
PROBLEMS OUT MYSELF

CHAIR W.A.C. INVOLVED IN IMPROVING THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT OF
WOMEN WORKING WITH MEN AND WOMEN TO ACHIEVE THIS

THE DAY THE UNION SPOKE TO US I HAD A HANGOVER AND COULDN'T
SUSTAIN INTEREST

SOMETIMES GETS A LITTLE POLITICAL/FEMINIST WHICH I FIND OFF
PUTTING

+ I FEEL IT SEPARATES US THE NETWORKS SHOULD BE MIXED

I HAVE MY FIRST EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MEETING SOON I AM LOOKING
FORWARD TO MEETING OTHER FIREFIGHTERS

NO NETWORK AT LOCAL LEVEL WOULD USE NATIONAL IF NEEDED

+ TOO PETTY FOR MY LIKING AND DETRIMENTAL TO THE REPUTATION OF
WOMEN IN THE BRIGADE

THE WOMEN DO MEET INDEPENDENTLY

NO LOCAL NETWORK

+ I'M NOT TO SURE. ONLY BEEN TO TWO MEETINGS (I DON'T REALLY
AGREE WITH IT)

I AM UNAWARE OF HOW IT FUNCTIONS ALTHOUGH I DO FEEL SUPPORTED
BY IT

TABLE THIRTY SIX Question: Do your male colleagues support the idea of
women's networks

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Cum		
			Percent	Percent	Percent
YES	1	4	11.1	12.9	12.9
NO	2	9	25.0	29.0	41.9
INDIFFERENCE	3	1	2.8	3.2	45.2
SOME OF THEM	4	6	16.7	19.4	64.5
DON'T KNOW	5	9	25.0	29.0	93.5
50/50	6	2	5.6	6.5	100.0

.	5	13.9	Missing
	-----	-----	-----
Total	36	100.0	100.0

Mode 2.000 Valid cases 31 Missing cases 5

TABLE THIRTY SEVEN Question: Do your male colleagues support the idea of women's networks

99% NO
 NOT AT ALL QUOTE "WHY DO YOU NEED THEM YOU'VE GOT US"
 SOME OF THEM
 I THINK THEY WOULD FEEL LEFT OUT
 AFTER I EXPLAINED THE NEED TO THEM
 I DON'T KNOW BUT I WOULDN'T THINK SO
 DON'T BE A CUNT!
 MOSTLY
 SOME DO
 I'VE NEVER ASKED BUT I WOULDN'T THINK THEY WOULD SUPPORT IT
 A FEW BUT GENERALLY ITS SEEN AS DIVISIVE AND PREFERENTIAL
 TREATMENT
 CYNICAL
 NOT REALLY MOST OF THEM FEEL WE ARE GETTING SOMETHING THEY
 ARE NOT
 THEY MAINLY THINK THE IDEA IS ONE OF THOSE SILLY WOMEN'S
 INVENTIONS AKIN TO KNITTING CIRCLES
 I'VE NEVER FOUND THE NEED TO ASK
 I DON'T KNOW WHAT A WOMEN'S NETWORK IS
 A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS
 MAJORITY O F THEM DO NOT LIKE THE IDEA THE MAJORITY OF MY FEMALE
 COLLEAGUES DO LIKE IT
 FEEDBACK FROM THE OTHER STATION I WORKED AT NO. AT MY STATION
 NOW I AM UNSURE BUT WOULD GUESS NO DUE TO PREVIOUS PROBLEM

Appendix Eighteen

Backlash

The use of the term male 'backlash' is common in many works on equality and gender and had Faludi (1992) not used the term for her book then this would have formed the title for this dissertation. Backlash within the context of this dissertation refers to the way men consciously withdraw their support and undermine women in the workplace. The L.F.C.D.A. Equality Audit draws attention to the male backlash when the male work force perceive extra opportunities have been given to women. The instance the L.F.C.D.A. refer to concerns pre-entry training, an attempt to level the playing field for women and ethnic minorities, but can be any occasion that women are perceived to be given advantage. This is not unintentional harassment, but harassment carried out to actually harm women, to remind them of their place (at home looking after babies and men) and can involve

- * verbal abuse;
- * non-co-operation from male co-workers;
- * poor personal recommendation/references
- * poor job evaluation/bonus rating
- * impossible performance standards
- * refusal to offer overtime
- * demotion or downgrading
- * transfer to less satisfactory work;
- * worsening of shift pattern/hours
- * termination of employment

(Hadjifotiou, 1993, p.22. underline suggests areas where male firefighters can use the backlash to 'good' effect)

In particular for women firefighters this can mean that they will not be supported when they arrive at the station as new recruits and throughout their service. Despite the obvious psychological effect that this will have in excluding women from the group(see appendix eleven and fourteen), it has equally important effects on how they learn to become firefighters.

Once at the station new recruits then begin their second phase of training, much of which is carried out by experienced firefighters. This 'on the job' training involves familiarity with equipment, its practical application, knowledge of how to deal with fires and importantly the recruits role as an inexperienced firefighter. Many of the women have shown from their replies to the survey that this knowledge is withheld by male firefighters and Cockburn, Connell and Walby see this as a way men retain power. Without such freely given assistance women will not be able to perform their duties as firefighters professionally and this will be used by men to point to women's lack of suitability in this occupation (see Clayton v Hereford and Worcester, 1995, Case no 27856/93). This creates a self fulfilling prophecy and indicates a systemic disadvantage for women in the fire service.

Appendix Nineteen Equal Opportunity Training

Table thirty eight demonstrates that 31.4% of the women have not received any equal opportunity training at all and table thirty nine indicates that 45.7% have received only one training session. From table forty, one women is recognised as having received 14 hours training (but she has completed a considerable amount of service) and 18.8% have only had 2 hours training. 76.5% of the women consider that the training is 'not ongoing'(table forty one), but it must be recognised that this received a low rate of response with 52.8 % of the cases not responding. This suggests that these women do not know if the training will be continued, and this is a bad practise in its self. When the figures for length of service are studied alongside the amount of training received, the enormity of the failure to train women in equality matters becomes even more apparent. In total the thirty six women who responded to the survey have 145.5 years service between them (table forty two) and have been given 72.5 hours of training in equal opportunities (table forty) in total, less than half an hour per year.

Table forty three indicates that only 26.1% of the women considered the training was 'useful', and the qualitative data (table forty four) provides insight to why these women were of this opinion. Seven women point directly to a perceived failure of the instructors, and two of the interviewees supported this view pointing specifically to the overtly hostile approach given by recruit instructors. This particular failure is extremely serious because recruit training instructors are in a very powerful position. The significance of this power is unfolding as this dissertation is being written by a further harrowing example of harassment. The sub judicii nature of the case prevents comments other than to suggest one women has spoken out against this training after being sacked for what she alleges has been the result of discrimination by recruit instructors. The union have achieved her reinstatement, but the consequences of the inquiry, that should follow, may make the fire service

more aware of this area of inadequacy. For training centres would be expected to give the highest priority to equality and the fire services failure to achieve this again indicates a lack of commitment and understanding. Any further research into the fire service will have to ensure a number of training centres are visited to ascertain if bad practice exists in this fundamental area.

TABLE THIRTY EIGHT

Question: Have you received any formal equal opportunity training by the Brigade?

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
YES	1	24	66.7	68.6	68.6
NO	2	11	30.6	31.4	100.0
.	1	2.8	Missing		
	-----	-----	-----		
Total		36	100.0	100.0	
Mode	1.000	Valid cases	35	Missing cases	1

TABLE THIRTY NINE

Question: How many times trained?

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
	0	10	27.8	28.6	28.6
	1	16	44.4	45.7	74.3
	2	4	11.1	11.4	85.7
	3	4	11.1	11.4	97.1
	6	1	2.8	2.9	100.0
.	1	2.8	Missing		
	-----	-----	-----		
Total		36	100.0	100.0	
Mode	1.000	Valid cases	35	Missing cases	1

TABLE FORTY

Question: Total time given to equal opportunity training ?

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
hours training	0	10	27.8	31.3	31.3
	1	8	22.2	25.0	56.3
	2	1	2.8	3.1	59.4

2	6	16.7	18.8	78.1
3	1	2.8	3.1	81.3
4	1	2.8	3.1	84.4
5	1	2.8	3.1	87.5
6	1	2.8	3.1	90.6
8	1	2.8	3.1	93.8
11	1	2.8	3.1	96.9
14	1	2.8	3.1	100.0
.	4	11.1	Missing	

Total	36	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 32 Missing cases 4 Sum 72.5

TABLE FORTY ONE

Question: Is the training in equal opportunity ongoing ?

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
	0	1	2.8	5.9	5.9
YES	1	3	8.3	17.6	23.5
NO	2	13	36.1	76.5	100.0
.		19	52.8	Missing	

Total		36	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 17 Missing cases 19

TABLE FORTY TWO Question: Length of service ?

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
1=6 months service	1	3	8.3	8.3	8.3
	2	6	16.7	16.7	25.0

3	4	11.1	11.1	36.1
4	2	5.6	5.6	41.7
5	5	13.9	13.9	55.6
6	3	8.3	8.3	63.9
7	1	2.8	2.8	66.7
8	2	5.6	5.6	72.2
11	1	2.8	2.8	75.0
12	1	2.8	2.8	77.8
15	1	2.8	2.8	80.6
16	1	2.8	2.8	83.3
20	4	11.1	11.1	94.4
28	2	5.6	5.6	100.0

Total	36	100.0	100.0	

Sum 291. divided by 2 to equal years= 145.5

TABLE FORTY THREE Question; was the training useful, mediocre, unproductive ?

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
None	0	1	2.8	4.3	4.3
USEFUL	1	6	16.7	26.1	30.4
MEDIOCRE	2	8	22.2	34.8	65.2
UNPRODUCTIVE	3	8	22.2	34.8	100.0
.	13	36.1	Missing		

Total	36	100.0	100.0		

Mode 2.000

TABLE FORTY FOUR COMMENTS ON BRIGADES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TRAINING

key - = inadequate instructors
+ = training centre instruction

- PATHETIC NORM ATTRACTIVE MALE OFFICER GIVING BEST IMPRESSION ACCOMPANIED BY STUNNING FEMALE 6 INCH HEELS GIVING ALL THE WRONG MESSAGES THEORIES DELIVERED TO BORED HOSTILE LOUISH MALE GROUP TRYING TO IMPRESS ON THE FEMALE FIREFIGHTERS HOW TOUGH AND RUDE UN-MOVABLE AND RACIST THEY WERE.
- ONE SESSION WITH CONSULTANT GOOD. OTHER SESSION WITH COUNTY COUNCIL NOT SO GOOD
- IT WAS AT THE STATION WITH THE WATCH

- I FIND THAT THIS SORT OF TRAINING IS DETRIMENTAL IT BREEDS RESENTMENT

- THIS TYPE OF TRAINING RAISED MORE PROBLEMS AMONG THE MEN THAN IF NONE HAD BEEN DONE SPECIALLY THAT TRAINING DONE BEFORE I JOINED THE WATCH

- USELESS BECAUSE AND ONLY BECAUSE THE PEOPLE CONVEYING THE MESSAGE HAD NO IDEA HOW TO DO IT NO COMMITMENT TO FAIRNESS TO PEOPLE ;BUT CONCERNED WITH KEEPING PEOPLE QUIET AND FURTHERING THEIR OWN CAREER NOT TRUE OF EVERYONE TRAINING THOUGH

- + ONLY AT TRAINING SCHOOL AND FOUND IT MORE HARM THAN GOOD AS IT ONLY ENCOURAGES FURTHER SEGREGATION

- + ON INITIAL TRAINING COURSE IT CAUSED A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE DUE TO POOR TRAINING TECHNIQUE ON THE PART OF THE INSTRUCTOR

+ IT WAS A DISCUSSION LECTURE AT TRAINING CENTRE MORE USEFUL FOR AWARENESS OF MALE COLLEAGUES

+ AT TRAINING SCHOOL

+ PART OF THE RECRUITS COURSE I'M NOT SURE WHETHER IT WAS THROUGH THE UNION OR THE BRIGADE

+ I BELIEVE AS BRIGADE GETS MORE FEMALE MEMBERS THIS WILL BECOME MORE IMPORTANT WE HAD A SESSION AT TRAINING SCHOOL IT SCARES MEN ON HOW TO TREAT ETHICS AND WOMEN

I DON'T WANT SPECIAL TREATMENT AS THIS CAUSES THE PROBLEMS

I HAVE BEEN ASKED FOR COMMENTS BUT HAVE HAD NO TRAINING JUST A CHAT WITH A D.O. ONCE

I RECEIVED THIS TRAINING WITH MY WATCH WHO HAVE QUITE A GOOD ATTITUDE TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES . IT MAY HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT HAD I BEEN IN THE COMPANY OF PEOPLE I DON'T WORK DIRECTLY WITH

MEN STILL NOT WANTING TO CO-OPERATE ON SUBJECT

ITS NOT REALLY ME THAT NEEDS THE EQUAL OPS TRAINING

CAUSES RESENTMENT MOSTLY DUE TO PRESSURE FROM WOMEN A PROMINENT FEATURE LEADS TO INTERESTING HEATED FRUITFUL DISCUSSION AND SOMETIMES ACTIONS

MOST MEN ON MY WATCH ARE OK TO YOUR FACE BUT I SUSPECT SECRETLY E OPS MEANS NOTHING TO ANY OF THEM BECAUSE THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN IN A MINORITY SITUATION

SOME INFORMATION INTERESTING BUT I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER AIMED AT MAYBE THE OLDER COLLEAGUES WHOSE VIEWS AREN'T QUITE AS OPEN AS THE YOUNGER ONES

THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES REP HAS SPOKEN TO ME TWICE TO CHECK THINGS ARE GOING OK BUT I DON'T FEEL I COULD REALLY APPROACH EITHER REP IF I HAD A PROBLEM

THIS TRAINING IS AVAILABLE BUT I HAVE MISSED THE TRAINING DUE TO LEAVE AND CHANGE OF STATIONS

Appendix Twenty Question: Do you consider your Brigade at senior level supports the concept of women firefighters?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cum Percent	Percent
YES	1	23	63.9	67.6	67.6
NO	2	11	30.6	32.4	100.0
.	2	5.6	Missing		

Total	36	100.0	100.0		
Mode	1.000	Valid cases	34	Missing cases	2

Appendix Twenty-Two Bad Publicity