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PARTICIPANT NO. 21 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

***INTERVIEWER INTRODUCED TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION.**

***P21:** Well in my view there is a business case for it but I'm not, I hope that my views don't become commonly held wisdom because my argument will evaporate if they do. I have always believed that it is possible to get dramatically better value for money out of minority groups than umm your average Brit., in so much as if the average minority group member is being treated prejudicially then there arise more of them around for people like us to take advantage of. So we get a better person per pound than what we would do if we were in the white person market, or the male market rather than the female market.

***INT: BECAUSE THEY'RE GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY?**

***P21:** Not only that but because you know, supply and demand, there's not as much demand. So we can take our pick.

***INT: OF THE PEOPLE THAT ARE LEFT?**

***P21:** Uh hmm, so I've always believed that anyway. But, this company is a bit odd in so much as it's, it hasn't actually got (..) any (..) or if it has, very very few, racial or sexual barriers anyway. The company is a privately owned company. It's owned by a Jewish guy who started off poor in Montreal umm, certainly Montreal is a massive immigration, or was more when it was more buoyancy in it than there is today and those sort, that ethos of of just going for the best irrespective of sex, colour, religion, or whatever is uh something that we foster. So we don't actually have extremely (..) actively pursued and espoused strategies for racial equality or sexual equality, we simply aren't prejudiced against either women or ethnic minorities. So our, our, we're rather passive but that's because we don't think we have a problem and we don't want one and we despise prejudice. But we don't put a flag up a pole and we don't seek to measure our statistics, we just hire the best people that we can get our hands on. And as many, in as large quantities as we can find them, regardless of of of how different they are and why they're different.

***INT: THAT'S INTERESTING BECAUSE THE OTHER THING THAT I FOUND WHEN I WAS GOING THROUGH THE LITERATURE IS THAT FROM THE STATES, DIVERSITY IS COMING OVER. YOU KNOW VALUING DIVERSITY RATHER THAN SAYING "WE ARE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYERS", "WE VALUE DIVERSITY"...**

***P21:** We, we can, we don't uh value diversity in the sense that it's aesthetically pleasing, or intellectually stimulating or, fun to have around or it pampers to have, to use that word, we're wonderful human beings but we do value ethnic diversity in so much as it entrains languages that we can benefit from economically that we wouldn't get from your average Brit. from Maidenhead or whatever. Probably. And that works

like a charm for us. We do have, in this company, we have maybe a dozen Germans and almost a dozen French people just in this office, in Colnbrook. We have a few Italians, we have, we're trying to bring in a Russian-speaking person from Bulgaria at the moment. As far as skin colour is concerned it's a bit of a non-issue. We don't do business with the Indian sub-continent out of here or any parts of Africa so we don't need people who happen to speak those languages because they happen to have the corresponding skin colour. But I actually interviewed an Afrikaans-speaker yesterday uh who does work in our company and he could be very useful when we try to get into South Africa, which will be quite soon. So we see it as a very positive thing but not for altruistic reasons because it just happens to give us a practical solution to a practical problem.

***INT: UMM, IT'S NICE TO HEAR THAT ACTUALLY. I INTERVIEWED SOMEONE WHO WORKS FOR AN INNER LONDON BOROUGH WHERE THEY'VE HAD IN PLACE YOU KNOW A VERY STRICT POLICY AND POSITIVE ACTION AND ALL THE REST OF IT AND BASICALLY NOW, TWENTY YEARS LATER THEY NOW HAVE A DIVERSE POPULATION THAT REPRESENTS THE LOCAL POPULATION OUTSIDE OF THE COMPANY.**

***P21: But can they actually do the job?**

***INT: WELL THIS IS THE THING, HE SAID THAT PEOPLE TAKE THE MICKEY, THERE'S SUCH AN ABUSE OF POWER BECAUSE PEOPLE AREN'T THERE (..) NATURALLY, THEY'VE BEEN THROWN TOGETHER...**

***P21: ...I think that's entirely true. Uh, I was listening to an article yesterday about err Hackney Council and all the trouble they've been involved with, uh with the sexual abuse of children by a gentleman who's uh (..) Trotter uh you know because of their desire to operate closed shop strategies, be they political or sexual, rather than open economics. And that's what we run here, open economics. So I don't think we actually want umm to positively be prejudicial towards ethnic minorities and sadly, the word ethnic minorities usually means people with different colour skin in practice rather than the fact that they come from a different country where they speak a different language, which is the bit that actually interests us anyway. I mean I don't think we particularly want to do that because we just don't take a prejudicial view. One thing I think is an absolute and utter tragedy for (..) open-minded companies and I hope we're one of them, is that because of racial sensitivities, we cannot treat people in our company who are not meeting our satisfaction levels in terms of performance, equally because if some of them have got different colour, uh coloured skin to the majority in the UK, we can find ourselves in serious hot water for allegedly making racial judgements against them when in fact our problem might be that they don't get out of bed in the morning, or they don't work hard enough and that's, as far as we're concerned, has got nothing to do with the colour of their skin or their religion.**

***INT: JUST THEIR PERFORMANCE?**

***P21: Exactly. And we cannot deal with under-performance with ethnic minorities in the same way as we can with white people. And that...**

***INT: SO DOES THAT NOT UMM...**

***P21: I think it, if we were, if I wasn't prepared to ignore it, which is possibly a small sign of a positive bias towards ethnic minorities, we could easily try to put a rule in place, for Christ's sake don't take on any ethnic minorities because if they're not performing, you're going to have a hell of a job getting rid of them.**

***INT: SO I WAS GOING TO SAY, DOES THAT NOT BALANCE OUT THEN YOUR ARGUMENT FOR SAYING WE'RE PICKING THE BEST OF THE BUNCH BECAUSE NOT EVERYBODY WANTS TO EMPLOY ETHNIC MINORITIES...**

***P21: ...Umm it doesn't balance it out because I refuse to allow us to be prejudicial, either positively or negatively, because of the stupidity of legislation. I'm prepared to take the risk that we're going to have difficulty dealing with under-performance (inaud) white skin umm because I'm more interested in getting good people and if I get the right good people, there's a higher chance that I won't have the problem anyway. But when I occasionally do, (..) you've got to be very very careful. Even, for example, if people are not performing and you choose to not maintain their contract beyond the first two years of their employment, which is a way of of of getting rid of people without anything...**

***INT: REDUCING THEIR RIGHTS, YEAH.**

***P21: We can't do that with uh ethnic minorities because they have rights immediately.**

***INT: YEAH?**

***P21: If they can construe that the fact that we didn't get on is a racially based problem. But I'm prepared to accept the consequences of that because I don't want to be biased at all.**

***INT: SO HOW RESTRICTIVE OR ADEQUATE DO YOU THINK CURRENT LEGISLATION IS THEN?**

***P21: I think as a, I've got an ambivalent attitude for it. I've always believed that however hideous legislation is which protects minority groups and it started off most obviously in the UK with protecting women's rights. I happen to believe that if, if people's rights aren't enshrined in law, and failure to adhere to those laws will not result in a punishment then, sadly, common sense and decency will not be adequate to improve people's position. So I believe we must have them. The sad but inevitable negative consequences are that these rules can be used against organisations by unscrupulous employees who are actually, don't give a damn about the ethnic issues at hand but they just want to do what's best for them as selfish individuals. And we, you know we have a case at the moment of an individual who's claiming that we effectively terminated his employment because of his err, the colour of his skin. And we terminated because of under-performance and we went through quite a lot of rigmarole to counsel him and guide him and tell him we weren't satisfied and ask him what he was going to do about it but as soon as we terminated his employment he's taken out a racial rap against us. Which we feel that we will be able to defend because we have uh**

people of non-white skin colour in management positions and we've recently promoted people. And if we could find more that were good enough, we'd promote them as well, so hopefully, we will be viewed as decent, open-minded people.

***INT: SO IS THAT SEEN AS A SAFEGUARD THEN, THAT YOU HAVE GOT PEOPLE FROM MINORITY GROUPS IN HIGHER POSITIONS?**

***P21: Well I think it's seen as a safeguard once we recognised that we we had a threat, i.e. the threat of litigation because of an accusation of racial discrimination but we didn't do it deliberately. We we we promoted the the the people with non-white skin to those positions because we think they're damn good. (..) I mean to be honest with you, one of the individuals is a, is an Afro-Caribbean person, who is probably damn good because she gets so much stick outside that she's had to be damn good to get as far as she's got! So she's triumphed in adversity really and we are taking advantage of that by giving her a better job opportunity because she's actually very very proactive.**

***INT: SO THE MOTIVATION OF YOU AS AN EMPLOYER THEN IS BUSINESS SENSE RATHER THAN ALTRUISM?**

***P21: Absolutely. One hundred percent.**

***INT: YEAH? YOU SOUND LIKE YOU HAVE THE PRINCIPLE OF IT AS WELL.**

***P21: I uh, I despise prejudice really, I think it's based upon ignorance and it denies organisations the opportunity to get hold of the best talent. And it also makes some people's lives bloody miserable when they don't need to be and I don't think that's right. But I don't use my job here as a soapbox to uh, you know, propagate my views on certain things. I happen to be married a non-white and I have children who are non-white, so I guess I've got a slight vested interest but that I see is not a question of defending the position of my loved ones it's I guess based upon experience. I actually know what it's like. But you know again exploring it, a fairly awkward and sensitive part of the question (..) I married to an Indonesian, an Indonesian who happened to grow up in New York and she was an Indonesian who not only could be compatible with her own culture in the home and within the Indonesian community but could actually be totally compatible with the American culture in New York, which is actually very diverse because most of her friends were Jewish and Chinese and Black and whatever. Umm, whether I could have married a normal Indonesian uh I don't know, I possibly couldn't but my non-white wife works in Slough and is a school teacher and is, gets tested out regularly by the ethnic minorities over there to find out well you know, whether she's one of the establishment or whether she's one of them. And in fact she's one of the establishment because she's there to do a job and she doesn't give a monkeys about what colour she is, or what colour the people are. She basically fixes problems and she doesn't show bias and umm and that's probably why I (..) have a successful marriage with a non-white person because she, we don't have any colour-related issues in our marriage. Or cultural-related issues, she doesn't, you know, pray several times a day and she doesn't eat food which is purely dictated by her religion, she eats different food because she, she has an ethnic background from a different part of the world. But she's kind of (..) totally and utterly compatible with her surroundings wherever she is (..) and and that is the basis of the vast majority of racial problems I think that that uh**

people are not capable of adapting to their environment, be it the ignorant whites who can't handle people who are different or the (..) if you like ignorant non-whites who cannot recognise that they innately behave differently and as a consequence are different in the eyes of the people that they've got to deal with and they don't necessarily find, they don't even see the need to understand the problem or make concessions or make people feel comfortable.

***INT: HOW MUCH OF THAT DO YOU SEE AT WORK – PEOPLE NOT BEING COMFORTABLE WITH EACH OTHER?**

***P21:** Umm (..) a principle in the office environment I see (..) almost none. I can't actually think of any specific examples at all. One thing that we've noticed recently is that, we've just expanded our warehouse operation and moved it from here to Hayes and the only way we can get people to do work in that warehouse at the salaries we pay over there is to take masses of ethnic minorities. And the majority of ethnic minorities that we have over there are first generation. So their, they are behaviourally, culturally (..) and in every other way different and that is something where we as a company need to adapt. For example if we have a social event over there, we need to recognise that, for whatever reason and be it right or wrong or stupid or intelligent, some of them don't eat the things that the rest of us eat. Umm some of them find it objectionable to be in the same room as a person drinking alcohol and things like that. So we are going to have to expand our horizons over there to be able to handle their inflexibility, if you like, so that we can maintain a solid relationship with them. And if for example at the Christmas part, there were one or two wise-cracks made about why we invited those people from the warehouse, they're a bunch of plebs, but that doesn't necessarily only relate to their skin colour. I mean the fact that they're ethnic minorities sadly means in our economic environment that they're at the bottom of the economic pile, or the socio-economic pile and so by implication they're plebs. But there are some white plebs over there as well, if you use the same value system, and umm and I don't know whether the remarks were directed at the white plebs or the non-white plebs but it was pretty despicable and we did what we could to express solidarity with the people over there who had been described as plebs, and you know, tried to convince them that it didn't represent our company position.

***INT: SO HOW MUCH OF THAT KIND OF DISCRIMINATION DO YOU THINK IS INTENTIONAL AND HOW MUCH OF IT IS JUST A GENUINE MISUNDERSTANDING?**

***P21:** I think umm I mean intentional is a very peculiar word, I mean (..) in so much as I come from a part of the country where people enjoy taking the piss out of each other, which is the way Geordies tend to be, I'm by nature eager to take the piss out of anybody. And a vehicle for doing that could be sex, religion, skin colour, or whatever, so (..) I hope and believe that when I make these silly remarks that they are indeed unintentional but I mean describing someone as a bunch of plebs cannot in any way, shape or form be described as intentional, it can only possibly be deliberate however the key issue for me is what is it based upon and I would suggest that it's based upon ignorance and insensitivity, so the problem lies fairly and squarely with the perpetrator rather than the victim. But as a person, as I say, who indulges in the occasional wise-crack, I've got to accept that that's unsavoury to some people and inappropriate but it

just, that's, you know, to be honest, that's the way it is where I come from and I try to adapt as best I can.

***INT: YEAH. THE SAME PERSON THAT I SPOKE TO AT THE LONDON COUNCIL SAID THAT ALL THE WORKPLACE HUMOUR HAD GONE. THAT THEY'D PUT ALL OF THESE PEOPLE TOGETHER AND EVERYONE WAS TOO SCARED TO MAKE A JOKE, OR TO HAVE A LAUGH WITH ANYONE IN CASE IT WAS MISCONSTRUED, WHICH SEEMS SUCH A SHAME.**

***P21: Absolutely. It is a shame. It depends whether you like wit or not and I'm sort of fairly obsessed with it, so it really is a great shame.**

***INT: SO WHAT IS YOUR ACTUAL INVOLVEMENT WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR POSITION HERE.**

***P21: Well I can't say that I have any involvement at all with equal opportunities because (..) it is an innate part of our company ethos. It isn't about (inaud)**

***INT: DO YOU HAVE A SEPARATE POLICY?**

***P21: No, I, I don't even know whether we have a policy. We don't really have an elaborate policy and we certainly don't do quartering or anything hideous like that but we do have statements all over the place in our in our policies which say we are an equal opportunities employer and we do not show uh bias on the grounds of race or religion or creed or colour or sexual deviancy, well not deviancy umm tendencies or inclinations or whatever. So in in that sense we, I, you know, there's nothing to get involved in.**

***INT: SO THERE'S NO TRAINING, THERE'S NO MONITORING...**

***P21: ...Nope, no there isn't (..) monitoring. It's a non-issue for us and we want it to remain a non-issue. Because we really try to run a meritocracy.**

***INT: WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS IF TOO MUCH EMPHASIS GETS PLACED ON IT THEN?**

***P21: I think it (..) I think you end up with what you've ended up with in whichever London Borough that you've talked to, where you end up with people who haven't got a job on merit. I think the economic consequences are disastrous. The management consequences would seem to be disastrous and what you said earlier seems to confirm that. Uh I think there's, you know, even somebody who has a prejudicial view in his head (..) uh you're not going to ram anything down his throat that's going to change that. What you might hope is that over a period of time through observation the person realises that the whole thing is really rather silly. And I think any form of enforcement or overt umm policy or whatever, in that direction actually is forcing things down their throat and will get in the way of their becoming less stupid and more in line. So I, I don't think that in practice it would be beneficial if we feel that we can avoid it. But that is something of a contradiction with my earlier remark that I believe that you**

cannot help the plight, you know, of the under-trodden if you do not legislate for it. There is a (..) ...

***INT: ...WELL THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LEGISLATION AND THE COMPANY POLICY ANYWAY...**

***P21: Well, there is in a way but I mean, you know, we are obliged to reflect legislation in our company policies umm we can't, you know, we can't write policies that are not in conformity with the law but what I'm saying is I think the the the naturalness approach to it all works better than all the (..) dictates or whatever.**

***INT: SO WHO IS IT THAT TAKES RESPONSIBILITY FOR CREATING THIS ENVIRONMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND MERITOCRACY?**

***P21: Well I think the person who definitely has taken responsibility initially and still ought to be the most influential figure is the president and owner of the company, Mr. X, the Jewish guy from Montreal. And I think he has fostered those views throughout our organisation for sort of almost thirty years of existence and people have, he he's ended up hiring and retaining people who have an open-minded view. And in the UK I think we're pretty much all like that, in senior positions but definitionally I guess I'm responsible because I'm the HR Director.**

***INT: SO DO YOU UMM, I'M JUST WONDERING BECAUSE IF YOU HAVE THESE MISSION STATEMENTS AROUND, IN OTHER COMPANIES THERE ARE COMPLETELY EMPTY, THEY MEAN NOTHING. I'M WONDERING HOW YOU PUT ACROSS TO YOUR EMPLOYEES THAT THESE ARE REAL. HOW DO THEY KNOW? HOW DO THEY PERCEIVE THAT THEY'RE IN THIS KIND OF ENVIRONMENT?**

***P21: Uh, I mean we have our our mission statement on the wall, which I can show you on the way out but it's got nothing to do with race! It's about what we do for our customers and how we do it, what's in it for us and you know, what's in it for them. Umm, we we, in about the last year have started to write down our policies and procedures in a dramatically more formalised way and umm I'm responsible for editing them and approving them. Particularly in so much as they involve HR. Umm and these things are reflected in those statements. We don't actually train people on these things. We don't communicate with them in some formalised way other than the fact that we issue our policies and procedure in a very formalised way.**

***INT: AND DO YOU THINK YOUR COMPANY IS DOING THIS MORE SUCCESSFULLY THAN YOUR COMPETITORS OR OTHER INDUSTRIES?**

***P21: I don't know, I think uh, I'd like (..) I was going to say I would like to think we are. I I don't particularly want to think that we are. I suspect we are because there are a lot of ethnic minorities here and there are a lot of non, you know, kind of regular, white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant type people in positions of significant influence. So I suspect we might be, but I don't know. I don't have any strong views on it. I don't want to be better than anybody else, I just want there to be no problem.**

***INT: YEAH, BUT YOU SUSPECT THAT YOU ARE.**

***P21: Well I, I think so because I (..) when I came to work in this company I was quite amazed at at at the ethnic diversity and the (..) comments that had been made particularly by the president and owner that that, you know, we don't care whether they're green, blue, black, white, yellow, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Moslem or whatever, as long as they can do the damn job.**

***INT: SO HOW DOES THAT AFFECT THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF YOUR EMPLOYEES WORKING TOGETHER? IN THAT IT IS SO DIVERSE, DO PEOPLE MIX SOCIALLY WELL?**

***P21: ...I think I think they mix very well socially, I think that's got to do with a couple of things. I think that the non-Brits that we've brought in here from outside of the country are all highly educated and have expressed a desire to come here anyway. The majority of the people that we've hired, that we have in the UK, I mean the vast majority of our workforce, certainly in an office environment is graduate level anyway, so they're reasonably smart, or meant to be. And the ethnic or religious or, well ethnic or religious minorities that we have in our organisation are invariably people who were born here and whose families have lived here for all of their lives and it's, have learnt, outside of our organisation, to come to terms with their environment. So when they come in here, there's usually no problem. But I think they might actually find it quite pleasant because of the fact that maybe if they worked somewhere else they would be treated as darkies or whatever but they aren't here. So maybe, you know, I just don't know, we don't necessarily know because it's a non-issue.**

***INT: ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY KIND OF WHITE MALE BACKLASH OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?**

***P21: Like, oh like those idiots that organise themselves in armies in America umm no, not really.**

***INT: BECAUSE IT'S BEEN FAIRLY WIDELY REPORTED THAT WHITE MEN ARE SCARED BASICALLY THAT THEY'RE BEING PUSHED OUT BY...**

***P21: ...Oh I see. No not really, no. I mean we we employ predominantly extremely strong aggressive achievement-orientated people, so I would be dismayed if any of our white males were so wimpish that they couldn't handle stiff competition from women, ethnic minorities, or or whatever.**

***INT: RIGHT AND WHAT ABOUT WOMEN? WHAT SORT OF RETURNER RATES DO YOU HAVE FOR MATERNITY LEAVE FOR EXAMPLE?**

***P21: Uh, I haven't got statistics and we don't particularly work them out, maybe we should though but we've got other priorities. I have an impression that the majority of women who leave here to have children come back again.**

***INT: DO YOU HAVE ANY LIKE FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES OR?**

***P21: In what sense?**

***INT: IN TERMS OF FLEXIBLE HOURS, OR CRÈCHE FACILITIES, OR PATERNITY LEAVE?...**

***P21: ...We don't have crèche facilities, we have maternity leave and paternity leave. The (..) the way we tend to do things around here ..) because it's a private company and it is owned by one person, so whenever you spend a penny there's no mystique about whose pocket it's coming out of, it's that we tend to act generously to people in an (..) on a case by case basis rather than to institutionalise our generosity in the form of you know, thou shalt have nine months on full pay if thou has a kid, I mean if we have a situation for example where people are in need of medication and they're not correctly insured to get exactly what they need, in many cases the company just signs a cheque and pays the bill for you. But that is not the same as writing out a policy saying that we'll cover you for anything.**

***INT: SO YOU'RE NOT AUTOMATICALLY ENTITLED TO ANYTHING?**

***P21: Yeah. We prefer to have a reasonable sort of approach to normality – things that normally crop up. And when things which are abnormal crop up then we umm (..) To give you an an absolutely radical example of what I've just said and the thing that we've been talking about, there's a gentleman in our company who's a Sheikh. He's a British Sheikh who's spent much of his adult life in Canada, so he's got a sort of mid-Atlantic accent who (..) had kidney failure. And the company accommodated all of his needs in terms of time, purchased a portable dialysis machine for him and ultimately made a one hundred thousand dollar donation to a hospital to make sure that he got new kidneys double quick.**

***INT: AND YOU DID THAT ON A BUSINESS CASE RATHER THAN HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS?**

***P21: Yes. He'd worked in the, he'd worked in the company for about ten years. Did a great job and needed fixing quick. And we didn't give a damn about his skin colour or his religion uh and uh the company made a hundred thousand dollar donation to this hospital to ensure that he got fixed up double quick. He's still here and he's possibly in line for further promotion. To you know, a very high level of management.**

***INT: SO DO YOU SEE THAT KIND OF THING THEN, THAT YOU'RE KIND TO YOUR EMPLOYEES, AND THEREFORE YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE KIND BACK TO YOU. DO YOU GET ANY?**

***P21: I think that's how we see it but we are never the less an extremely demanding company, so I would say that many of our employees do not necessarily believe that we are kind to them. I think they regard us as fairly hard taskmasters. But the people who can deal well with our being hard taskmasters (..) are people who subsequently regard us as being kind and considerate. But the people who are very very (..) sensitive about their own dignity and their own rights and their own career aspirations, often find us insensitive. So in other words, we're not very good at dealing with other people's egos. But for low-ego people we are often considered to be a damn good company to work for and very sensitive to their needs. (..) It's an odd one, it's it's it says that perception is a product of the mind of the perceiver as well as the person that's being perceived.**

***INT: YEAH, THIS IS ANOTHER PROBLEM THAT I'M TRYING TO LOOK INTO, IN THAT IF YOU RAISE THE EXPECTATIONS OF PEOPLE THEN THEY PERCEIVE IT TO BE WORSE THAN IT IS AS WELL.**

***P21: Absolutely.**

***INT: YOU KNOW LIKE IF PEOPLE ARE EXPECTING SOMETHING THAT'S NOT COMING THROUGH. OK I'M JUST ABOUT THROUGH BUT CAN I ASK WHETHER YOU HAVE AN OPINION ON DIVERSITY VERSUS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, SO THAT...**

***P21: What does that mean?**

***INT: SO WHERE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IS TALKING ABOUT MINORITY GROUPS AND SPECIFYING ACTUAL GROUPS, DIVERSITY IS VALUING THE DIFFERENCE OF EVERY UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL.**

***P21: Yes I think that diversity is the name of the game. I think equal opportunities is sort of desirable in a way but (..) is a suicidal strategy I mean eventually you're going to end up having people for the wrong reasons.**

***INT: EVEN IF YOU WERE STILL HIRING ON A MERITOCRATIC BASIS?**

***P21: Well (..) it's very difficult to say, I mean, I just, I will always want it to be a non-issue. That, for me, if that's what equal opportunity means, then I'm in favour of it. But I'm not in favour of a situation where you would say we have two candidates for this job, all other things being equal, these people, there's nothing to show between them, but we're down on blacks and he happens to be black so let's take on a black one rather than a white one. I I could see a practical logic to that but I would find it disgusting. I would rather leave uh the issue of ethnicity off the table completely and I would rather (..) find that our ratio of black to whites had gone the wrong way because somebody hired a white rather than a black without knowing whether the person was black or white, than that we corrected our ratio by saying well they're equal so we'll hire the black. I just don't like that. I think it stinks.**

***INT: DO YOU THINK THAT'S A SITUATION THAT OFTEN HAPPENS THOUGH, THAT CANDIDATES THAT ARE SO EQUALLY MATCHED?**

***P21: Ah, I wouldn't be surprised. I think it would be something that happened with people that thought they were being enlightened and open-minded and I I just think it's disgusting. I think treating these issues as being irrelevant is the word for it I think, is the greatest honour that you can pay someone, to treat them as an equal and I think that's what we try to do.**

***INT: AND CAN YOU SEE SITUATIONS WHERE DIVERSITY MIGHT BE USED AS A SMOKE SCREEN? IN THAT YOU'RE SAYING WE'RE NOT GOING TO TALK ABOUT YOUR ETHNICITY OR YOUR SEX, OR ANYTHING THAT ... (INAUD)**

***P21: ... Oh I see...**

***INT: COULD YOU SEE THAT OCCURRING? AND SAYING OH NO (INAUD) BUT ACTUALLY IGNORING...**

***P21: ...but we but it would provide a way for us to be racist?**

***INT: Uh (..) no I. I don't (..) I don't think so really and I and the reason I would do this is because the way legislation is in the UK we we we can't be overlooked. It can't be forgotten. You know as soon as we get into any (..) oddish situations with people with a different ethnic background, there's a bell rings and the bell says watch it! And that is thanks to legislation. And then you get situations where people definitely get treated more favourably in our company for being non-white than being white because we don't want to end up in court.**

***INT: YEAH. AND ARE THERE...**

***P21: ...But that's not fair. At all. And we don't like it but that's what we need to do to stay out of court.**

***INT: AND AVOIDING THE COST OF LITIGATION, IS THAT A VERY REAL MOTIVATION?**

***P21: Yes it is. Well, it's the cost and time, the aggro, the uh (..) bad press, you know, we don't want it.**

***INT: WOULD IT SERIOUSLY AFFECT YOUR REPUTATION THEN?**

***P21: Uh, I doubt if it would seriously affect our reputation but it would affect us. We just don't want any of it. We, we, we, what it might seriously affect is this amazing delicate balance that we seem to be able to tread. You know, if we, if we had one person who successfully got a racist rap against us, or we had to go to court, even if it didn't get thrown out umm (..) it it could send one or two people the other way. One or two people who are sensitive to ethnic problems who cannot find anything wrong with us at the moment and are happy to work for us but who might say, well, they got away with it but you know it must be true because otherwise the guy wouldn't have taken them to court or whatever. So that, that would worry us a lot. I mean what, what was in the local press (..) wouldn't worry us and is just a waste of time and money really. But we would care about our people. All I'm saying is inside it might matter. Outside we wouldn't really care. I mean, we can handle the aggro, you know.**

***INT: DO YOU THINK THAT YOU'RE SHOWING, OR ILLUSTRATING, DEMONSTRATING TO YOUR EMPLOYEES ADEQUATELY THE CORPORATE MESSAGE, THE ETHOS? DO THEY KNOW WHAT KIND OF ENVIRONMENT THEY'RE IN?**

***P21: I (..) I (..) I think so, you know? I think so. But usually when you talk in business terms about doing anything adequately it's because you have a proactive plan: this is where I am, this is where I get to and that's how I'm going to get there. And what I'm saying is we don't do very much because we don't have much of a problem.**

***INT: YOU'LL JUST KEEP IT AS A NON-ISSUE?**

***P21: Yeah. But but...**

***INT: ...AND IS THAT HOW YOU THINK IT SHOULD BE DONE?**

***P21: I think so if you can get away with it but it's not very convincing, in terms of convincing a person like you that we're (..) you know, that we're on the right track and that you know (..)**

***INT: I THINK I'M WITH YOU ON THAT TO BE HONEST. I MEAN IT'S DIFFICULT BECAUSE YOU CAN'T HAND OVER NUMBERS AND SAY LOOK THIS IS WHAT WE'RE DOING, THIS IS HOW MUCH...**

***P21: ...Or statements, or...**

***INT: OR STATEMENTS, BUT I THINK, I THINK THAT ONCE YOU STICK TAGS ON IT THEN IT CHANGES THE NATURE OF IT...**

***P21: ...Yeah but but I think the fact that we have umm several non-white managers and many foreigners who speak funny languages in senior positions, for example I've just promoted a French girl, name, to Strategic Asset Manager. Uh, she's the boss of Asset, she's a French person who's been here for a couple of years and is white as it happens and speaks with a funny accent but she happens to speak a language that most people around here don't speak so it's very beneficial. We reviewed her very positively.**

***INT: SO IT'S GOOD FOR BUSINESS?**

***P21: We've got a German person in a strategic management role who's multi-lingual, who speaks again with a slight accent but, you know. Again, white but...**

***INT: ...IF THEY DIDN'T SPEAK THOSE LANGUAGES COULD YOU, WOULD YOU SEE ANY OTHER ADVANTAGE TO HAVING...**

***P21: Well as individuals, yes. Uh but what, the positive bias that we actually show is towards getting hold of people who happen to do things that we want them to do. And if it's foreign languages, they happen to be foreigners. It's an inevitability but it's got nothing to do directly with their race. It's indirect. Because we want people who can speak these languages. I mean we also have bilingual people in here who are English and white, who speak French and English equally well, for example we've got two of them in our organisation. And French people think they're French and English people think they're English. Uh, they happen to be English.**

***INT: SO IT'S THEIR SKILLS THAT YOU'RE AFTER.**

***P21: Yeah. It's a non-issue.**

***INT: RIGHT I THINK THAT JUST ABOUT COVERS EVERYTHING. THANK YOU.**

***P21: I hope it's been helpful.**

***INT: YES VERY, I MEAN THE ONLY PEOPLE I'VE SPOKEN TO SO FAR WHO HAVE DONE ANYTHING ABOUT IT HAVE JUST COME UP WITH NEGATIVES AND SAID THERE IS NO BUSINESS ADVANTAGE TO BE GAINED, SO IT'S ER...**

P21: Well let's be, it depends, see it depends on the sort of business they're in and we are the European headquarters of a multinational company and we have opened up in ten new countries last year. Apart from the four that we, the five that we were already trading in, so that's the way, that's our business. If we can't communicate, we can't do business and our job is to do business right across Europe.

***INT: DO YOU GET THE ADVANTAGE OF THAT CULTURALLY AS WELL AS WITH LANGUAGES?**

***P21: I think we do, yeah. I think so. But obviously it's it (..) dramatically different from what we do in North America because the North American markets are much much more homogenous – not only behaviourally but economically they're they're, the prices for the things we sell don't vary much from North, South, East or West in the North American continent. But the difference between the parts that we sell in Belgium and the parts that we sell across the border in France or in Germany or in Holland, can be can be very different. And and and so this is a little bit of a cultural melting pot and people need to be ultra-sensitive, not only to cultural aspects but to economic aspects. So it's, so that's that's the nature of the beast. So if you, you know, you might find that making Mars bars in Slough or whatever is is is different. You might find that if you've talked to you know a company that makes (..) I don't know, something that only British people in British markets consume, all this is irrelevant. I mean it's just like in the North, where I come from, in Newcastle, I don't know what the answer is but if there are a thousand black people living in Newcastle, I'd be amazed. Just because they didn't go there. Well, if you go to like a small town like, called South Shields, which is just down the coast, which was a port, they've they've, if you read books about it, they've got a massive Arab community which they've had for centuries. The last riots they had I think were at the beginning of the century and the Arabs and non-Arabs live together in almost perfect harmony. And you've got mosques there, where Mohammed Ali had his wedding blessed, and stuff like that, you know, but otherwise, it's miles away from anywhere. And you do find, you'll find businesses which don't communicate with the outside world. We're the opposite. That's why. So it's, it might be refreshing but it's just because we're very different and we need to be to survive.**

PARTICIPANT NO. 22 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

***INT: OK, I'LL START WITH TRAINING THEN AND ASK WHICH ASPECTS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES YOU ACTUALLY TRAIN FOR.**

***P22: Umm racial harassment, racial discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual discrimination. We talk about the law and how it relates to work. We also talk about, depending on the course, positive action, genuine occupational qualifications. Umm, about legal cases that have actually gone to tribunal.**

***INT: SO IT'S VERY LEGISLATION BASED?**

***P22: Yes. Yes and (..) we spend quite a lot of time in the first part of the morning talking about language and what is OK to say in the workplace, what behaviour results in and what isn't OK. And I get them to talk about their points of view and then I make a point about, well this is what an industrial tribunal would think. Things like that.**

***INT: SO WHEN YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE LANGUAGE USE ARE YOU STILL RELATING IT TO LEGISLATION – IT'S NOT POLICY DRIVEN?**

***P22: Yeah well, yeah relating it to policy and then also then the law and industrial tribunals.**

***INT: SO WHAT DOES THE TRAINING HOPE TO ACHIEVE? ARE YOU GIVEN AN OBJECTIVE OR GOAL AT THE BEGINNING OF THAT?**

***P22: Yeah, the objectives are to raise their awareness of the equal opportunity issues and to know, to be aware of their company policy and to be aware of their rights and duties and responsibilities under that policy. And umm how to combat racial harassment and sexual harassment and discrimination in the work place.**

***INT: RIGHT. SO IT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S FALLING ON TWO SIDES THEN: THE ONE SIDE THAT IS AVOIDING LITIGATION AND INDUSTRIAL ACTION AND THEN YOU'VE GOT THE PROTECTION OF THE EMPLOYEES – THAT IF IT**

HAPPENS TO YOU THIS IS WHERE YOU GO. IS THAT HOW IT USUALLY FALLS?

*P22: Yes, that's right.

*INT: YEAH. SO WHAT DOES THE COMPANY ACTUALLY (..) YOU KNOW, DOES IT ACHIEVE THAT AIM, WHAT DOES THE COMPANY GET FROM THAT? WHY DO THEY EMPLOY YOU TO TRAIN THEIR EMPLOYEES?

*P22: I don't know the answer to that. I mean I would, I would guess because it's a huge company and because it's umm (..) the main branch of the company is in America, where they're very hot on these issues. So there's lots and lots of stuff coming over from the States – you've got to train this, you've got to do this because they do it in America. And there's a lot of pressure on the company to do that in America.

*INT: SO IT'S JUST TO FOLLOW THROUGH FROM THE STATES?

*P22: Yeah, I mean, I wonder, I do (..) perhaps I shouldn't say this but I do doubt whether they would actually put so much into their equal opportunity if it wasn't for the powers that be in the States.

*INT: YEAH, YEAH. AND THE POWERS IN THE STATES, HYPOTHETICALLY, ARE THEY DOING IT BECAUSE THEY'RE FORCED TO BY THEIR OWN LAWS DO YOU THINK OR?

*P22: Well the person that runs the company does genuinely seem to believe very very strongly about this. It does appear that it comes from his heart, that he cares about people, that he cares about the company. (inaud) I mean that, that's how he comes across.

*INT: AS A GENUINE HUMANITARIAN.

*P22: Yes.

*INT: SO DO YOU THINK HE'S SEEING SOME BUSINESS GAIN FROM THIS AS WELL OR IS IT JUST HIS PERSONAL...

***P22:** Oh certainly, certainly, yes, because of, because of globalisation, it's, the company is dealing all around the world and they've got to be aware of (..) of the different cultures and, and respect those different cultures and be able to work with everyone and understand each other. And, and it looks good for the company. The company can seem to be a non-discriminatory, open-hearted, you know the sort of company that people think of as caring.

***INT:** THAT'S A GOOD POINT THAT BECAUSE THERE'S A LOT OF UMM, IF YOU'RE SEEN TO BE DOING THIS THEN YOU HAVE THIS CARING IMAGE AND YOU HAVE THIS, BUT WHO IS IT THAT THEY'RE HAVING THIS CARING IMAGE WITH? WHAT GAIN DO THEY GET FROM BEING SEEN TO BE LIKE THAT?

***P22:** Well I think that if somebody's got some money and they want to buy the product that this company makes umm they've got some money, they think, well I can go to that company, oh but this company I heard about in the paper the other day and they've got a really nice (..) you know, they employ loads of women and they're really (..) so I'm going to buy one them, one of their (..) cars.

***INT:** YEAH?

***P22:** Yeah.

***INT:** SO IT'S THEIR CLIENT BASE ULTIMATELY?

***P22:** Yeah. And of course for a company (..) all sorts of people buy cars from them. Women and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities buy cars, you know. If they know that that company values and respects the workers who are the same as them, I'm being generalist here, but then they're more likely to buy their cars from them.

***INT:** SO IT'S MATCHING THEIR WORKFORCE TO THEIR CLIENT BASE?

***P22:** Yes.

***INT:** SO, I MEAN THAT MAKES SENSE IN TERMS OF EMPLOYING PEOPLE OF A DIVERSE CULTURE, NATIONALITY, ETHNIC ORIGIN, OR WHATEVER.

BUT THEN (..) I STILL CAN'T QUITE SEE WHY THEY WOULD SPEND SO MUCH MONEY ON TRAINING PEOPLE JUST TO RAISE AWARENESS. I MEAN IS THERE ANY MEASURE OF SUCCESS OF TRAINING OR IS THAT IT, YOU DO THE TRAINING AND RAISE THEIR AWARENESS AND ARE THEN LEFT, OR IS THERE ANY FOLLOW UP, OR IS THERE SOME MEASUREMENT OF HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE IT MAKES?

*P22: I'm not sure. I don't think so. My colleague (P23) would know more about that than I do because he's the person that's (inaudible). I mean personally I think there should be more training. Otherwise it doesn't actually make much difference really. I can only go on some of the people that I've met and who along the line um, and they say 'oh you know that training thing you did, it really made me think, it really made me open my eyes' (..) to whatever.

*INT: SO YOU DO ACTUALLY NOTICE SOMETIMES THAT PEOPLE...

*P22: ...Sometimes but I, I'll usually, they'll say there isn't a problem but occasionally they'll admit that there's room for improvement.

*INT: AND CAN YOU SEE THE DIFFERENCE AS YOU'RE GOING THROUGH YOUR COURSE? LIKE IN A DAY'S TRAINING, OR TWO DAYS, WHATEVER IT IS?

*P22: What in the people?

*INT: YEAH.

*P22: Yes. Um, with some. With some not. Their defences close down right from the start. With other people they're very um, very unsure at the beginning and then later on they're sort of, 'oh', then they start leaping from their chairs and saying, 'well what about..?' and I'm answering their questions and they're going, 'oh, yeah'. And at the end of the day they go 'oh great, that was really interesting, that was really good, I never thought this could be interesting.' So yes, I mean it's, you do get some positive feedback from people at the end of the day. And then others that (..) the others that are so closed and so angry (inaudible) they make me think I got something right!

***INT: YEAH? SO DO YOU SEE A LOT OF DISCRIMINATION WITHIN, IN YOUR COURSES THEN? DO YOU SEE PEOPLE JUST COMING IN AND ESPOUSING THEIR VIEWS?**

***P22: Oh I have heard some very, very horrible things.**

***INT: THEY DON'T PUT ON THEIR BEST BEHAVIOUR BECAUSE THEY'RE COMING TO YOUR TRAINING COURSE?**

***P22: No. No. Surprisingly. Sometimes I think they just say things to try and shock me because I'm a woman. They try to offend me. You can see them think 'well who is she? I'll show her' you know, 'we'll shock her' and they swear at me. But it doesn't shock me. I've forgotten what the question is! I've gone right into a training day!**

***INT: HOW MUCH DISCRIMINATION DO YOU SEE AS PART OF YOUR JOB?**

***P22: I would say, generally speaking, quite a lot. Um overt discrimination um racism mostly and sometimes from people that you wouldn't expect it, who try to put on a very um (..) very 'right-on' front and then as you get them to do some case studies and some discussion, then they come out with some stuff that you think, my goodness! And you're in that position, that's shocking, you know! So yeah and from all levels.**

***INT: IS THERE A LOT OF DIFFERENCE DO YOU THINK THEN BETWEEN PUBLIC OPINION AND PERSONAL? LIKE YOU SAY WHEN THEY COME IN AND THEY PUT ON A 'RIGHT-ON' FRONT AND THEN AS THEY GET INTO THE WORKSHOP...**

***P22: Yeah I think some of them try to think, right, I'm not going to let them know what I really think and they try to say the right thing but it's quite difficult to keep it up all day, things come up. And it does come up. I remember someone saying 'oh yeah but THEY', or 'but THEY'RE always like that'. Uh huh! (laughs)**

***INT: YOU DIDN'T WANT TO SAY THAT! (LAUGHS)**

***P22: If, depending on who they are and what they are and what, what, and whether they can change, they can go 'well, I, I, uh' and you know they get quite upset about it.**

But even that, it's quite difficult. I don't have that. I'm not going to have um (..) if somebody's saying something, I'm going to challenge them. We'll talk about it and say why it's not right. I'll tell them what a legal decision on that would be. Like there's one tribunal case that I use where a black man complained about being called 'black bastard'. And an Asian man on my course said, 'oh it doesn't mean anything, it's just banter'. And I said 'well, OK, you come into work and someone says to you, "alright Paki bastard"' and he went (pulls a face) and just sat for a moment and then said 'I wouldn't like that'. And it really gets them thinking.

***INT: DO YOU NOTICE THAT, WHERE A LOT OF PEOPLE (..) THEY HAVE A STANDARD FOR THEMSELVES BUT THEY DON'T SEEM ABLE TO RELATE IT TO ANYBODY ELSE? IS THERE A LOT OF THAT?**

***P22: Yes but that's why we have such heated discussions because I say is there anybody Irish here, or is anybody Welsh, or from Scotland or anybody from an ethnic minority background. And to the Scots, 'what's it like being called Jock? Are you called Jock?' And the Welsh are 'sheep shaggers' and the Irish are 'thick Paddy' and there's normally something. And you know you find most Scottish people HATE being called Jock. 'It's alright once but I've got a name! And they keep going on and on about it'. And for the Jewish or anybody, I mean, I'm a Jewish woman and I know what it's like to live through that and that it does hurt and that it is important and they need to realise that for others and because (..) because I get, I, you know, because it matters to me I get quite emotional at these things. Because if you feel it you feel it and anybody at work gets called a name they probably feel it. They're not being stupid, they're not being sensitive, it's offensive. You hear a joke about that, how do you feel? It normally goes in quite deep for people, so (laughs) (..) yeah so it's quite powerful stuff and I do it right at the beginning of the training day.**

***INT: YEAH. THAT'S ONE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT I'VE HAD RESEARCHING THIS ACTUALLY BECAUSE IT IS SO POWERFUL AND SENSITIVE, PEOPLE JUST DON'T WANT TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH A LOT OF THE TIME. AND LIKE YOU SAY, YOU START OFF AT THE BEGINNING OF THE INTERVIEW AND THEY TELL YOU ALL LOVELY, PERFECT TEXT BOOK THINGS AND AS YOU GET FURTHER AND FURTHER THROUGH THE**

INTERVIEW THEY'RE COMING OUT WITH OUTRAGEOUS THINGS, WITHOUT REALISING AT ALL AND I THINK, I THINK A LOT OF DISCRIMINATION CAN BE COMPLETELY UNINTENTIONAL, JUST THROUGH IGNORANCE, JUST NOT ABLE TO...

P22: ...They go 'oh', you know, 'I'm not racist, I just (inaud)' (laughs)

*INT: BECAUSE I FOUND, WITH MY FIRST SAMPLE OF PEOPLE THAT I INTERVIEWED WERE GENERAL WORKFORCE PEOPLE BUT I NOTICED THAT UM (..) DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE WERE MORE OR LESS AWARE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON AROUND. AND IT WAS ALMOST, I MEAN I DIDN'T DO A LARGE ENOUGH SAMPLE TO DO IT STATISTICALLY OR ANYTHING BUT THE WHITE MEN TEND TO, JUST DON'T SEE THAT THERE'S ANY PROBLEM AT ALL. I MEAN YOU ASK THEM AND THEY SAY, 'NO, NO, IT'S ALL ON MERIT HERE. YOU CAN DO THE JOB OR YOU CAN'T DO THE JOB, I DON'T CARE WHERE YOU COME FROM, DON'T CARE' YOU KNOW? THEY JUST REALLY DON'T SEE, OR DON'T LIKE TO ADMIT THAT THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE GOING ON AT ALL. AND THEN THE BLACK WOMEN, I SUPPOSE I'M TALKING THE TWO POLAR ENDS IF YOU LIKE, HAD A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT STORY TO TELL AND THEY DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING OTHER THAN YOU HAVE A JOB BECAUSE YOU'RE WORTHY OF THE JOB, YOU KNOW YOU HAVE THE SKILLS TO DO THE JOB. BUT THEY WERE SO AWARE OF ALL THE DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES, NOT JUST FOR THEM AS BLACK WOMEN BUT FOR ANY OTHER MINORITY GROUPS. AND THERE WAS THIS KIND OF SPECTRUM THAT YOU WOULD EXPECT YOU KNOW, FROM ONE TO THE OTHER OF PEOPLE'S DIFFERENT LEVELS OF AWARENESS, AND I WONDERED IF YOU'D SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT AS WELL, LIKE WHO IS AWARE OF...?

*P22: ...Oh definitely yeah because sometimes I run groups of just white males and they go, 'oh there's nothing like that here, we don't have sexual harassment' and yet when I run the groups when there are some women in the groups, the moment they say, 'oh no there's no sexual harassment here' they say well, 'can I just tell you this is what happened to me'. And it's much more powerful, when the group is mixed. Because

often, once you have a few black people in the group, they can say, 'well this is what happened, this is how I see it, this is what I've found, this is what I've been called'. And to have a white person only, if there's only white people in the group and there's only me, I can say, this is what, what I've found and heard, but it makes things much harder.

***INT: DO YOU HAVE ANY SAY OVER WHO'S IN THE GROUP OR DO THEY JUST TURN UP ON THE DAY?**

***P22: No. Whoever gets sent that day just comes.**

***INT: THAT'S A SHAME.**

***P22: It is because you have the opportunity to have a real cross-section and you could choose that and they would get a better days' training out of it but people at the moment just get sent from their department when they can make it.**

***INT: SO WHAT KIND OF IMPRESSION DO PEOPLE HAVE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES WHEN THEY FIRST TURN UP THEN? DOES IT HELP IF THEY HAVE SOME INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT?**

***P22: Well usually no. They can't even imagine what we're going to do all day. Sometimes people say, oh yeah, I'm quite interested in this, or that and are quite happy to learn. But I mean I don't know what you think but there is some genuine interest.**

***INT: YEAH. IS IT REGARDED AS IMPORTANT?**

***P22: To them?**

***INT: YEAH.**

***P22: As a person?**

***INT: YEAH.**

***P22:** No. Mostly I think they see it as an easy day out of the office and they think it's a waste of time. I do believe that. As I mentioned sometimes they say 'but I'm not racist, what have I got to do this for?'

***INT:** IT'S A TRAINING COURSE!

***P22:** Yeah and I do that, you know, but generally and quite genuinely they think what will we do all day? Because the first thing I do is show them what the day will cover and once they see there's quite a few things to talk about, then they're usually, most of them, they shut up.

***INT:** THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE I'VE FOUND FROM TALKING TO PEOPLE IS THAT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES JUST WASN'T IMPORTANT TO THEM UNLESS THEY'D HAD A MAJOR VIOLATION OF THEIR RIGHTS, OR KNEW SOMEBODY ELSE THAT HAD SUFFERED THAT, THEN IT JUST WASN'T AN ISSUE. YOU KNOW, THEY VERY RARELY HAD EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT IT LET ALONE ANY DETAILS OF HOW IT APPLY. IT WAS JUST A COMPLETE NON-ISSUE FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE.

***P22:** Yeah. Quite regularly.

***INT:** YEAH. YOU KNOW FAR MORE IMPORTANT TO THEIR WORKING LIFE WAS, HOW WELL THEY GOT ON WITH THEIR FRIENDS IN THE DEPARTMENT, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES WAS SO LOW ON THEIR PRIORITY LIST THAT I WAS QUITE SURPRISED ACTUALLY.

***P22:** Yeah, maybe that's why women are generally more interested in the day because the vast, and especially in that environment, because you know, they've always got something to say. So uh, people (inaud) rather than (inaud).

***INT:** (inaudible) I WAS REALLY QUITE SURPRISED JUST HOW LOW DOWN ON PEOPLE'S PRIORITY IT WAS BUT, BUT THEN I SUPPOSE IF IT HADN'T BEEN AN ISSUE THEN THERE'S NO REASON FOR IT TO BE A HIGH PRIORITY. IT'S QUITE INTERESTING FOR MY ANYWAY. DO YOU THINK

THERE'S UM AN ELEMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT GETS OVER-RATED? IF THERE'S SOMETHING THAT'S OVER-PLAYED, OVER-DONE, THAT COULD HAVE LESS EMPHASIS PLACED ON IT?

*P22: No I don't think so.

*INT: NO. WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO TARGET ONE THING IN PARTICULAR THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AS BEING MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING ELSE?

*P22: I mean that would depend on the environment in which I was training. I suppose in a company that had to get on with globalisation then an appreciation of other people's cultures would be important but then you find that people would have to want to work together before any training would impact and a greater level of awareness would be needed, so that the people in the offices actually wanted to get on with those on the factory floor and often they don't expect that anyway nothing would work in isolation anyway. So no, I don't think so um no, probably not.

*INT: UM (..) AND POLICY IS SUPPOSE ANOTHER MAJOR ISSUE THAT I WANTED TO LOOK AT, IS HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE DO YOU THINK A POLICY CAN MAKE TO AN INDIVIDUAL'S BEHAVIOUR IN THE WORKFORCE? (..) POLICY RATHER THAN LEGISLATION?

*P22: Well it might do. (..) Perhaps if it was a small company with a detailed policy where all the employees shared the same vision.

*INT: YEAH. AND DO [NAME OF ORGANISATION] HAVE A DETAILED POLICY?

*P22: Yes.

*INT: THEY DO. AND DO YOU GO THROUGH THE POLICY AS PART OF YOUR TRAINING COURSE?

*P22: Yes as part of the training day. Paying attention to detailing what your duties and responsibilities are in the workplace. So uh, once they hear that the company really

does act on this and um depending on what level they're at, they're going to pass it on. Like if they're a manager and have got a few employees working under them then they have to pass it on to them. And they might be using it as an excuse that they don't the policy but you can say to them, well look, don't use it because the policy is, you know, if anybody ever reaches tribunal, you have to be able to say that were following policy.

***INT: YEAH, SO THEN FURTHER DOWN THE LINE THEY'LL BE ALRIGHT?**

***P22: Yeah.**

***INT: SO DOES THE POLICY ACTUALLY GO FURTHER THAN IS REQUIRED BY LAW?**

***P22: Yes. They cover um sexual orientation um, I can't think of the others now I've got a complete blank.**

***INT: YEAH, AGE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION.**

***P22: Do you want me to say what they are?**

***INT: NO NO, I'M JUST WONDERING WHY THEY WOULD BOTHER DOING THAT AS WELL. YOU KNOW, CAN YOU THINK OF A REASON OTHER THAN THEY'RE AN AMERICAN COMPANY AND IT'S BEEN PASSED DOWN THE LINE FROM THEM? IS THERE ANY BENEFIT TO A POLICY THAT IS MORE DETAILED THAN THE LEGISLATION REQUIRES? I'VE WORDED THAT REALLY BADLY! IS THERE ANY GAIN OTHER THAN AVOIDING LITIGATION?**

***P22: I think this is the interesting question.**

***INT: WELL YEAH.**

***P22: Um, I mean this is just my interpretation (..) and I may be wrong but I get the feeling from the way it is approached that this is the central point. I think it's about shifting blame off corporate to individuals.**

***INT: YEAH? WHAT TICK THE BOX TO SAY I'VE DONE THE TRAINING?**

*P22: Yeah. So that whatever racist remarks are made or whatever happens, they can say that it's not their fault because they've trained their employees and shifted the responsibility away from them.

*INT: AND DO THEY ACTUALLY HAVE A CLAUSE IN THEIR POLICY (INAUD)?

*P22: (inaud) discriminate.

*INT: SO THEY'RE PUTTING A LOT OF MONEY INTO CREATING A NICE REPUTATION FOR THEMSELVES. THEY OBVIOUSLY THINK THAT THEY'RE GOING TO GAIN QUITE A LOT BY (..) CHANGING THE PERCEPTION. LIKE ALL THIS CAN BE GOING ON IN THE ORGANISATION BUT AS LONG AS THEY'RE SAYING THEY'RE DOING SOMETHING ELSE, THEN MOST PEOPLE WILL BELIEVE WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT IT?

*P22: Umm, maybe (..).

*INT: YEAH? IT'S JUST, IT SEEMS LIKE A LOT OF MONEY, IT REALLY DOES, TO, TO, TO TRAIN EVERY EMPLOYEE (..) AND THEN JUST LEAVE IT, TO NOT HAVE ANYTHING ELSE FOLLOW UP FROM IT, SO IT IS JUST LITERALLY 'YES I HAVE ATTENDED THE COURSE' (INAUD).

*P22: I mean (inaud) once somebody has been trained, if they do, um do something wrong, then a tribunal...

*INT: ...BECAUSE THEY'VE HAD POINTED OUT THEIR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES?

*P22: Because they've trained them, they can say they're to blame for it. Because they've been trained, a tribunal will say, 'well you trained them, they know all the things (inaud)'. But an Asian for example (inaud) two boys (inaud) because they'd had training.

*INT: I'M JUST WONDERING, DO YOU THINK IT CHANGES THE NATURE OF IT, IF YOU (..) I MEAN NOT JUST [NAME OF ORGANISATION] NECESSARILY

BUT IN ANY ORGANISATION, BUT IF THEY MAKE AN ISSUE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, DO YOU THINK IT CHANGES THE NATURE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY? THAT IF YOU POINT IT OUT, THAT PEOPLE MAKE MORE OF AN ISSUE OF IT THAN THEY SHOULD, THAT THEY GET OVER-SENSITIVE, IF YOU LIKE, THEY BECOME REALLY AWARE OF WHO IS BEING PROMOTED AND WHO ISN'T, RATHER THAN JUST ALLOWING PEOPLE TO GET ON WITH THEIR JOB WITHOUT REGARD TO...

*P22: ...I know. I don't know about that. I mean that is something that would, I mean that a lot of people on the course said years ago that they feel about it, 'oh this is just bringing it up, and then the whole of them complain they're being sexually harassed.' Maybe that's true but I just don't think so. It might be a difficult subject and it's, it's bringing it up to be looked at directly, so, so (inaud).

*INT: AND DO YOU INCREASE, I'M TRYING TO THINK OF AN EXAMPLE, LIKE THE FIRE SERVICE ONE. I CAN'T REMEMBER THE DETAILS BUT IT WAS BASED ON THERE WAS A PERSON THERE WHO WAS MIXED-RACE AND THEN THE SERVICE DECIDED THAT THEY DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE FROM THE ETHNIC MINORITIES AND SO THEY IMPLEMENTED A POSITIVE ACTION PLAN. AND THE ONE MINORITY PERSON WHO HAD BEEN THERE PREVIOUSLY

*P22: What, recruiting people because they're black?

*INT: YEAH BASICALLY. PEOPLE SAYING THAT YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE JOB ON MERIT, THAT IT WAS BECAUSE YOU'RE BLACK.

*P22: Not that I'm aware of, no. I mean I'm not in local government or involved with any positive discrimination in my work and none of the companies that I work with are. It's what I feel (inaud).

*INT: THERE'S NONE OF THAT KIND OF BAD FEELING THAT PEOPLE ARE THERE BECAUSE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES (inaudible)

*P22: No.

***INT:** I'M ASKING BECAUSE I WAS SPEAKING TO AN H.R. DIRECTOR OF A COMPANY RECENTLY WHO HAD QUITE A STRONG OPINION ABOUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES. THEY DIDN'T HAVE A POLICY BECAUSE HE SAID THEY RECRUITED PURELY ON THE BASIS OF MERIT AND THAT WAS HOW HE WANTED TO KEEP IT. HE DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BECAUSE HE DIDN'T SEE IT AS RELEVANT TO BUSINESS. HE SAID THEY WERE GOING OK. HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY FIGURES, HE HADN'T DONE ANY MONITORING, HE DIDN'T WANT TO FIND OUT THE FIGURES BECAUSE HE WAS WORRIED THAT IT WOULD CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE PLACE BY MAKING AN ISSUE OF IT. I THINK (..) HIS HEART WAS IN THE RIGHT PLACE. YOU KNOW HE SAT THERE AND SAID 'IT'S REALLY NOT (..) I KNOW SKIN COLOUR SHOULDN'T BE AN ISSUE TO ME, IT SHOULDN'T BE AN ISSUE TO ANYBODY, PEOPLE ARE HERE BECAUSE THEY'RE GOOD AT THEIR JOBS AND I DON'T WANT TO SAY ANYTHING MORE ABOUT IT THAN THAT.' AND I THOUGHT WELL YES THAT'S TRUE, BUT THEN, THAT (inaudible) ALL THE POSSIBILITIES AS WELL, JUST THAT (inaudible) TO SEE WHETHER THEY ARE ACTUALLY OR WHETHER YOU'RE JUST ASSUMING (inaudible) AND I WONDERED THEN YOU KNOW, WHETHER WAS A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT FROM HAVING A POLICY. IT DOES BRING UP PROBLEMS. THAT'S WHY I WAS DIGGING, TO SEE IF YOU HAD COME ACROSS ANYTHING LIKE THAT, FROM HAVING A POLICY.

***P22:** Umm yeah. No, I would, I would imagine that it does happen because the issues are so personal to people but I haven't come across it myself and I haven't hear of it at [name of organisation].

***INT:** DO YOU TRAIN FOR OTHER COMPANIES AS WELL OR JUST [NAME OF ORGANISATION]?

***P22:** Not equal opportunities no.

***INT:** IS IT VERY DIFFERENT DOING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TRAINING TO ANY OTHER SORT OF TRAINING?

*P22: Hmm yeah. Yeah because it is (..) really it's very personal and that's what I wanted to do (inaudible) (..) To me it's as important as anything. So it matters. It really matters and when I'm actually talking it and I can feel that I can, I could nearly cry because it MATTERS. And especially when they get (inaud) that I don't see the need for it (laughs) OK, right! I do other stuff like assertiveness and stress management which are, I mean again they matter to me because they're about personal empowerment and about people growing so it matters to me but the equal opps is just something very powerful. It can bring up some deep emotions and very much (inaud) apathy (inaud).

*INT: BECAUSE YOU DO IT OR BECAUSE YOU DO CARE ABOUT IT?

*P22: I think they can see that I do care about it by the way I am with them. Because they go quiet when I'm talking (inaud).

*INT: COULD YOU DO IT IF YOU DIDN'T CARE ABOUT IT?

*P22: No, I don't think so. But (inaudible)

*INT: I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT THOUGH, THERE'S SOMETHING VERY (..) EMOTIONALLY CHARGED ABOUT THE SUBJECT AND IT DOES AFFECT PEOPLE VERY DEEPLY (inaudible). (..) WELL, THERE WAS ANOTHER THING THAT I WANTED TO ASK YOU. IT WAS ABOUT DIVERSITY RATHER THAN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND HOW WELL DIVERSITY ADDRESSES THE PROBLEMS. (..) THE ACCUSATION THAT'S LEVELLED AGAINST IT IS THAT IF YOU DON'T HAVE A DETAILED EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY AND YOU THEN MOVE STRAIGHT TO A DIVERSITY APPROACH, THEN YOU'RE IGNORING THE PROBLEM IN THE FIRST PLACE AND DIVERSITY CAN BE USED AS A SMOKE SCREEN. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF DIVERISTY VS. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES?

*P22: (..) Really, I mean I'm not up on diversity but it seems that equal opps is about groups of people, where diversity is about individuals?

*INT: YEAH.

***P22:** Well I certainly know that the company is bringing in diversity training now which is the way that [name of organisation] has been going in the States. And it's up trained up a lot of people to do the diversity training course. And umm (inaud) it is very like equal opps so we were thinking that it might be possible to combine the two things in training, which maybe people do see (inaudible) mainly (inaudible) . But Paul, (P23) Paul would be the one to speak to because he's (inaud) diversity training (inaud) um and he's actually got it from the States, so he will know more about it.

***INT:** RIGHT. BECAUSE I KNOW AS WELL IN A LOT OF THE TRADE MAGAZINES AS WELL, I'VE READ ARTICLES WHERE IT'S BEEN SLAMMED ALMOST (INAUD) BUT UM (INAUD) CAN'T SEE (INAUD) EQUAL OPPS UM BUT I THINK (INAUD) SUCCESSFUL.

***P22:** It just, especially in an environment like this, I mean I think one day because I want to really, what I want to do is hit in deep, to really get people to think. Not just give them information but to think of the pain involved.

***INT:** TACKLE PEOPLE'S PREJUDICES?

***P22:** Yeah, where does that come from? Why do they do that? I mean because, I'm a counsellor, a trained counsellor you see, so I think that, so I kind of feel that it is possible for people to change if they know why they do things and I want to go to that deeper level with people. You know, like when you ask someone why they feel they way they do and they say, "oh you know, my dad said that first (inaud) why do I hate (inaud) ?" And I want, you know to get to that, to be working at that level.

***INT:** (LAUGHS) EXAMINE YOURSELF YEAH.

***P22:** Yeah, (inaud).

***INT:** YEAH. THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO DO INITIALLY ACTUALLY JUST TO (..) START RESEARCHING THE ROOTS OF PREJUDICE AND ATTITUDES BUT IT'S JUST TOO HARD.

***P22:** (laughs) No I just get to do what I can in one day and try and (inaud) questions about (inaud) (laughs)

*INT: (LAUGHS) OK. THERE'S JUST ONE, WELL A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS ABOUT UM AN ENVIRONMENT OF EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY. DO YOU THINK THAT BY HAVING A POLICY THAT GOES FURTHER THAN THE LAW THAT THAT CONSTITUTES HAVING AN ENVIRONMENT OF EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY?

*P22: No. It's just words on paper.

*INT: YEAH?

*P22: Hmm.

*INT: OK. AND DO YOU THINK THE EMPLOYEES SEE IT THAT WAY AS WELL?

*P22: (..) I do.

*INT: SO IF YOU ASKED YOUR AVERAGE EMPLOYEE TO SAY WHETHER THEY WERE IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES (INAUD)

*P22: You'd get (inaud) um (..) and it would depend on their own feelings. Generally if they saw that everybody was appreciated even if they were shop floor workers, it's "how the bleeding hell (inaud)?" And for all those different people if they wanted to work together (..) then maybe it would work. (inaud)

*INT: DO YOU THINK THAT THERE'S ANY WAY THAT YOU CAN IMPLEMENT A POLICY IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WILL CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF EQUALITY?

*P22: (..) I doubt it. In fact (..) maybe in a small company, where there's (..) everybody's very aware of it and then only with everybody wanting it. If it mattered to everyone. But in huge organisations I don't think so because some people don't want it. They are racist and they don't want equality, they don't want women there. They should be at home. I've actually had a man say that on one course. He said "I'm sorry you're not going to like this but they should be home by the kitchen sink because that's where they should be. I know that's not politically correct but that's what I feel."

Human rights or politics never come into it. And what can you say? (..) He's coming from (..) something, an age where that's how it was. Why should we interfere with his home life? He had compassion for the kids and caring. He wasn't an unkind man.

***INT: JUST HIS APPROACH TO FAMILY LIFE?**

***P22: Yeah.**

***INT: THAT'S INTRIGUING THEN, SO FOR A POLICY TO ACTUALLY WORK, EVERYBODY HAS TO WANT THE SAME THING? SO YOU'D NEED A FAIRLY HOMOGENOUS WORKFORCE, WHICH KIND OF GOES AGAINST THE NEED FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.**

***P22: Yeah. Well I think it would be the same for the law to work. Everybody is going to have to want that law to work and then if they wanted it, they wouldn't need it.**

***INT: SO FROM A PURELY BUSINESS SENSE THEN, FINAL QUESTION, IF YOU'VE GOT THE MONEY HERE AND YOU CAN EITHER INVEST IN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OR NOT, WOULD YOU PUT THE MONEY IN IT?**

***P22: Oh yes. Oh yes. Definitely.**

***INT: YEAH? AND YOU'D DO IT ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS RATHER THAN ECONOMIC?**

***P22: Yeah.**

***INT: DO YOU SEE THAT THERE IS AN ECONOMIC GAIN TO BE MADE?**

***P22: Well I should think that if, if the company chooses everybody equal, everybody feels that they can get on with their work and their career and um people are going to join the company and they're going to stay there, so that's going to save them a lot of money just in terms of people staying and (..) and because they're working together effectively it's good for the company. But that's the diversity bit, isn't it about people from different backgrounds working together. They're all valued equally, they can do better at problem-solving, they can be a more effective company, if they are all**

genuinely valued. Being an optimist, I think yeah it could (laughs) (..). Umm, umm, I believe that it's possible. And, and I want to believe that it's possible. (inaud)

***INT: (LAUGHS) I CAN FEEL A WISH LIST COMING UP!**

***P22: (laughs) that's right yeah, yes. Yes. It's important to believe that it is possible. I mean it is very important that that's, it's going to be successful for everyone. Everybody in it feels equally valued, and equally empowered and that's quite difficult because there are (..) dominant (..) speakers! (laughs).**

***INT: (LAUGHS) WHO WOULD THAT BE THEN!**

***P22: (laughs) It's quite, I mean it's well-documented and even going back to school, boys are much louder in the classroom than girls, so it would be difficult.**

***INT: OK, THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED.**

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED.

PARTICIPANT NO. 23 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

***INT: OK, SO I'LL START BY ASKING IF YOU COULD TELL ME BRIEFLY WHAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IS.**

***P23: Umm, I've worked in the area of equal opportunities since 1982 when I worked for a government sponsored unit that did uhh training in the area of communications in the workplace, aimed mainly at Asian workers on the shop floor. Umm (..) and that was a national scheme. My involvement was working in East London in the manufacturing industry. And (..) that, after (..) probably by about the mid 80's umm, as as a national scheme there were probably about two hundred people involved in it nationally. Umm, I became aware that uhh, this was improving people's communication skills but it wasn't actually doing very much for the structure of the organisation that they worked in, so we became involved in designing the first, sort of race, what was then called race awareness training, took place. Umm to our knowledge, the only training that was being done was a black American airman that was doing some training in the military.**

***INT: SO WHAT WAS THAT AIMING TO ACHIEVE THEN, SETTING UP THAT TRAINING?**

***P23: That it would actually affect the structure of of organisations and that because we found that we were doing communication skills training for Asian workers but they weren't actually then progressing within the organisation. There was still sort of institutional barriers, not to mention personal prejudices about what people could and couldn't do. Some organisations had run sort of cultural awareness training umm (..) but we found that very often although that could be useful for some individuals, for others it simply replaced one set of stereotypes with a new set of stereotypes, or else was inappropriate information, so that uhh (..).**

***INT: AND DID IT WORK?**

***P23: Sorry?**

***INT: DID IT WORK, PUTTING THIS TRAINING INTO PLACE?**

***P23: The race awareness training?**

***INT: YEAH.**

***P23: (..) In, in, when you said did it work, in what way?**

***INT: WAS IT SUCCESSFUL? I MEAN YOU SET OUT WITH AN AIM, DID IT ACHIEVE THAT GOAL OF CHANGING THE STRUCTURE?**

***P23: I think it increased people's awareness of what, of what, of the processes of prejudice and discrimination and racial disadvantage. Umm in terms of actually getting more black people into positions of supervision and management, I would be (..) less confident. Umm maybe those results can only be now. I mean certainly there were no quick responses to it.**

***INT: SO IT WASN'T FOLLOWED UP AND MONITORED AS TO WHAT DIFFERENCE THE TRAINING HAD ACTUALLY MADE?**

***P23: No, that's (..) to my knowledge that that's an enormous problem with all equal opportunities training, diversity training and most training in general, there tends not to be long term evaluation. I mean you get sort of happy sheets at the end of the course umm I I would, yeah, I would dearly love to see some longitudinal study of people who were trained ten years ago, and if they were retrained five years ago, a comparison of what they felt and did then with what they felt and did now.**

***INT: YEAH. I'M JUST TRYING TO THINK, WHY WOULD AN EMPLOYER WANT YOU IN THERE? IF YOUR GOAL IS TO RAISE AWARENESS AND YOU'RE NOT MEASURING WHETHER IT MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE THEN WHY WOULD AN EMPLOYER WANT TO DO THAT OTHER THAN OUT OF HUMANITARIAN GOALS?**

***P23: Are we talking about then or now?**

***INT: WELL, ANYTIME. HAVE YOU NOTICED A CHANGE ACROSS TIME THEN?**

***P23:** I think there's a big difference and I think, umm, I think in the seventies, well I wasn't involved in it in the seventies but in the eighties (..) the main concern really I think was to keep on the right side of the law. So it was like a sort of minimalist intervention though even then there were some organisations, some individuals in some organisations, private sector as well as local government because I think it's through the sort of seventies and eighties, people mainly associated equal opportunities initiatives with local government. But there were umm a couple of companies that were taking some good initiatives and uhh (INTERVIEW INTERRUPTED BY PHONE CALL).

***INT:** WHAT DO YOU THINK MOTIVATED THE CHANGE FROM EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BEING JUST THE DOMAIN OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES INTO GOING INTO COMMERCIAL ORGANISATIONS?

***P23:** I think the main thing that's happened is an awareness of the business case. Umm but coupled with organisations changing so that you're getting people (..) now who are (..) say like graduate entry into management and organisations who have had some exposure to equal opportunities, umm at school or college. Albeit in a limited kind of way.

***INT:** SO IT'S JUST A YOUNGER GENERATION COMING THROUGH?

***P23:** Yes. I mean (..) I'm a bit concerned about that statement because I think I've also seen within that (..) younger group, I'm say thinking here maybe of people in their sort of early-mid twenties umm (..) evidence of embedded attitudes and discriminatory behaviour as well, perhaps not as overt as people twenty years older but uhh there's a kind of like surface liberalism so you've got...

***INT:** SO THEY'VE JUST LEARNED TO HIDE IT A BIT DEEPER THAN PREVIOUS GENERATIONS?

***P23:** Yeah, I think particularly with regard to race. I think there's maybe a bit more natural equality between young men and young women, that there aren't so many stereotypical assumptions say by male engineers who are twenty-five about what women engineers can do. Umm but I think at a racial level because (..) black people are so, still so significantly underrepresented in areas like like medicine, uhh, the few black

students who are at medical school are not seen as typical of black people. They become honorary whites for example. So I think although there's a superficial change, I wonder about the more embedded.

***INT: OK, THE BUSINESS CASE YOU CITED AS ONE REASON WHY IT'S TRANSFERRED INTO COMMERCIAL ORGANISATIONS. HOW MUCH OF THAT BUSINESS CASE IS BUILT AROUND AVOIDING LITIGATION AND HOW MUCH OF IT IS DUE TO OTHER BENEFITS THAT ARE RESULTING FROM EQUAL OPPORTUNITY?**

***P23: I think the latter. I think more and more people realise that if they want to be successful and grow with the market umm, they need teams that are diverse. Umm, that no matter how well white men have performed in the past, only employing white men means that they're going to miss out on certain perspectives. Now I (..) at what level that's thought of all the way through the organisation I'm not sure but I think that at, at a senior management level, if you take you know firms like Levi's, Ford's, IBM, that kind of thinking is there at a senior management level and that's really one of the things they have to do is to effect that all the way through to middle management. Quite often, you know, often the people that are making the appointments.**

***INT: THE PEOPLE I HAVE SPOKEN TO ALREADY SEEM TO HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT, I SPOKE TO A HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR, WHO DIDN'T HAVE, OR HADN'T SET UP, ANY SPECIFIC EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TRAINING BUT TRADED INTERNATIONALLY AND SO WAS INTERESTED IN PEOPLE'S LANGUAGE SKILLS. HE SAID HE DIDN'T CARE WHAT THEIR COLOUR OR CREED OR SEX OR ANYTHING WAS BUT THE SKILLS THEY HAD TO OFFER AT AN INTERNATIONAL DEALING LEVEL BECAUSE THEN IT WAS OF INTEREST TO THEM.**

***P23: But umm that company's customers may! (laughs) I think (..) particularly in Britain and in the States, we tend to focus on what skills we will need to sell. We don't actually think so much about customer perceptions.**

***INT: DO YOU THINK THAT'S AN IMPORTANT MOTIVATION THEN?**

***P23:** Yeah. I mean uhh, I think that (..) I think there are (..) I think obviously anywhere in the world people are interested in the best product at the best price but I think that within other cultures there are (..) there are very different cultural ways of establishing relationships and I think that some of the sort American and British models, where you go in, you do the business and you go out again, are inappropriate umm to other cultures.

***INT:** TO OTHER MARKETS?

***P23:** For other markets, yeah. Where people are looking for (..) relationship building up over a period of time.

***INT:** SO THAT IS A DEFINITE BENEFIT OF HAVING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE THEN?

***P23:** Hmm, yes. Yeah, I mean there was a case I read just recently that umm, frustratingly for you I can't remember the details of it in terms of the specific companies but there was one company that had Chinese-Americans working in the company and that company got some massive, it was in the aviation business, and they got a massive contract with China simply because, well not simply because, but what greatly aided it was that there were Chinese-Americans on the American team. And the Chinese negotiators said they felt much more culturally comfortable even though you know these were sort of second/third generation Americans, umm there was enough cultural affinity there for the Chinese to want to go with this company rather than the ones that were full of sort of white Anglo-Saxon Americans.

***INT:** SO THAT'S LIKE A TWO-PRONGED THING ALMOST THEN; THAT YOU'VE GOT THE RELATIONSHIP BUILDING SIDE AND YOU'VE GOT THE REPUTATION OF THE COMPANY WITH THEIR CUSTOMERS. CAN YOU THINK OF ANY OTHER BENEFITS THAT THERE MIGHT BE JUST SPECIFICALLY FROM HAVING A DIVERSE WORK FORCE?

***P23:** (..) I don't think there are any benefits in itself from having a diverse work force, I think you only get the benefits if it's well managed. Because you can have a work force that is very different but if people don't feel that those differences are valued and

respected, then they're not going to contribute anyway. So they're just going to be turned off and go to an organisation that values it. And I think increasingly, uhh I'm looking at graduates here, again there's there was a survey done of European business schools and one of the most significant things that, I think it was across fifty-six business schools and thirteen countries, and one of the most important things that graduate students in business studies and engineering felt in looking for an employer was one that had a truly multicultural umm work force and had policies to implement that. So I think that if people want to be employers of choice, they've realised that they've got no choice. They've got to be multicultural in the broadest sense of it. But not just, not just at a token level, that I mean, you know, a black face here, a woman here someone else here, but actually having it through the organisation.

***INT: SO ARE THEY LOOKING FOR EXAMPLES OF IT WHEN THEY'RE MAKING THOSE CHOICES OR ARE THEY LOOKING AT THE LEVEL OF POLICY THAT AN ORGANISATION HAS? WHEN A GRADUATE, FOR EXAMPLE, IS LOOKING FOR A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER AND THEY WANT TO CHOOSE SOMEONE THAT IS MULTICULTURAL, ARE THEY LOOKING AT THE PAPER OR THE PRACTICE?**

***P23: Both. From what my understandings are of this research that I read but also of of graduates that I talk to in different companies.**

***INT: SO WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF DIVERSITY BEING MANAGED BADLY?**

***P23: People get turned off and people leave and in some cases even stereotypes about people who are different from other people are reinforced.**

***INT: DO YOU THINK THAT HAVING A DETAILED POLICY OR A STRICT POLICY HELPS PEOPLE TO BE MANAGED BETTER, OR DOES IT PROVIDE MORE COMPLICATIONS?**

***P23: Policy on diversity?**

***INT: YES AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.**

***P23:** Yeah, I mean I think, you know, the policy is essential at some level where people (..) so that people know what the score is, so they know what the organisation's expectations are and what their responsibilities and rights are. But I think policies are pretty meaningless unless people have seen them being implemented but also have effective training in what it means. And there have been two or three industrial tribunal cases recently where organisations have had well established equal opportunities policies umm you know and that's gone out to all employees. Umm I can think of a sexual harassment one with the Civil Aviation Authority and they were found vicariously liable because the senior manager did not think that the action that he took at some residential training course was sexual harassment. Uhh.

***INT:** AND THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO KNOW THAT IT WAS.

***P23:** Hmm, so I think whether it's training or whether it is just in the culture of the workplace, people need to, it needs to be seen working. And I think, I don't think training is an end in itself, I think training is a way to get that happening.

***P23:** SO WHAT I'VE HEARD SO FAR IS THAT EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE BASED ON FEAR. IF YOU HAVE A POLICY THAT'S DETAILED THEN PEOPLE ARE SCARED OF BREAKING THE POLICY SO THEY DON'T BEHAVE NATURALLY, ALL THE NATURAL BANTER OF WORK, ALL THE SOCIAL ASPECT IS LOST BECAUSE IF YOU HAVE A WHITE MANAGER OR A BLACK MANAGER, OR WHATEVER THE SITUATION IS, IF YOU'RE DIFFERENT FROM SOMEBODY YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH, YOU CAN'T DEAL WITH THEM AS YOU WOULD AS A NORMAL HUMAN BEING BECAUSE OF FEAR OF GOING DOWN A DISCIPLINARY ROUTE. AND THEN ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE SCARED OF HAVING ANY POLICY AT ALL BECAUSE TO MAKE MENTION OF IT MAKES AN ISSUE AND THEY DON'T WANT IT TO BE AN ISSUE. AND I KNOW, I SIT THERE AND I THINK WELL I BELIEVE IN IT AND MOST OF THE PEOPLE I HAVE SPOKEN TO HAVE BELIEVED IN THE PRINCIPLE OF IT BUT MAKING IT WORK JUST SEEMS TO BE IMPOSSIBLE. YOU KNOW, IF YOU HAVE NO POLICY, YOU MIGHT SHOW A GOOD EXAMPLE BUT THERE'S NOTHING (..) PERMANENT. EVERYTHING THEY ARE DOING IS TO AVOID LITIGATION AS WELL. AND

ALL THE WAY ALONG IT'S BASICALLY BASED ON FEAR. I MEAN HOW DO YOU START TO OVERCOME THAT?

*P23: (..) It's very difficult and I think umm there is so much mythology around equal opportunities, diversity and I think particularly in the areas around harassment. Umm I think particularly where people look say to the States and people read umm accounts of people from, people who work with companies that go to the States, come across things that are so different. Usually their guidelines are so strictly enforced. I mean there's one college umm that has a policy on dating and written permission has to be granted at various stages. So before you kiss you have to have a written agreement, before there's a hand on the breast there has to be written agreement...

*INT: VERY ROMANTIC!

*P23: Yes exactly! Yes (laughs) and there's there's a caveat at the bottom that says none of the above applies if anybody has been taking drink or drugs (laughs) Umm anyway it's clearly unworkable but I think policies like that get put in place where there's a lack of commitment to have frank and open and honest discussion. And umm I think there is that danger that a lot of organisations will respond to equal opportunities and diversity by putting a policy into place and saying that's it. And I think the problem with rules is how they're general enough to cover you know what you want to talk about but specific enough to look at individual cases and allow indiscretion because I think, or talk about discretion rather! (laughs) an interesting Freudian slip! Because I think with things like harassment it's its', the extremes are clear. Nobody has a problem saying this is harassment, this isn't harassment but for a vast area in between, it's unsure.

*INT: I STARTED AS WELL, I INTERVIEWED A CROSS SECTION OF THE GENERAL WORK FORCE IN VARIOUS INDUSTRIES AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IS NO REAL ISSUE FOR ANY OF THEM UNLESS THEY HAVE SUFFERED SOME KIND OF VIOLATION. BECAUSE THE WHITE PEOPLE OR THE MEN DON'T WANT TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT BECAUSE IT'S NOT IMPORTANT TO THEM AND THE BLACK PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO SAY IT'S IMPORTANT TO THEM BECAUSE IT SOMEHOW DENIGRATES

THEM, THEY WOULD VIEW THEMSELVES AS THE TOKEN OR AS SHOUTING TOO LOUDLY FOR THEIR RIGHTS RATHER THAN GETTING ON WITH THEIR JOB AND ANY MENTION OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY SEEMS TO SCREAM THAT IT'S NOT BASED ON MERITOCRACY AND SO NOBODY WANTS TO HAVE ANY VIEW ON IT. IT'S STILL VERY TABOO. I WAS QUITE SURPRISED AT HOW SHROUDED IT IS STILL.

*P23: Yeah. Now I think that one merit of diversity is that it actually gets people to think about individual differences rather than thinking it's about women, it's about black people, it's about people with disabilities BUT the problem that I have with it is that it's all very well to say yes, look how different we all are and isn't this amazing and if we only lever with these differences we'll have this wonderful competitive advantage, it actually ignores the fact that there is systematic discrimination against black people and people with disabilities. So you know I think you need an approach that covers both. That for me is a fundamental problem.

*INT: SO YOU THINK EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY SHOULD RUN SIDE BY SIDE?

*P23: Yeah, I think they have to. I think organisations that say oh well yes, equal opportunities are out, we're looking at individual differences, umm (..)

*INT: USING IT AS A SMOKESCREEN?

*P23: Yeah, well either a smokescreen or or it's (..) their intentions might be sincere and genuine but I think you know that they're going to be missing some fundamental sort of structural ways in which people are disadvantaged.

*INT: SO YOU WOULD HAVE TO HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THEN HAVE DIVERSITY TRAINING ADDITIONALLY?

*P23: Yes. I think, I think you know, I think they mesh in, they they connect in with each other.

*INT: HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK UMM IS REALISTIC TO MAKE SUCH A WIDE DISTINCTION? I KNOW FOR EXAMPLE PEARN KANDOLA ARE

DIVERSITY SPECIALISTS AND SO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IS OUT OF THE WINDOW BECAUSE OF THAT AND THEY'VE TRIED TO MAKE SUCH A WIDE DISTINCTION AND THAT'S WHAT I CAN'T SEE.

*P23: At the risk of slander, I mean they were equal opportunities specialists not that long ago (laughs). Umm, I, I think it's much easier for organisations to embrace diversity. I think it's, it's probably much easier to sell it. It's a less threatening concept umm (..) but I, you know, I. There's a very good article actually that was far more coherent and articulate than I've been about this in Personnel Today a few weeks ago, a few months ago probably about the, written by umm an HR director saying yes, diversity is all very well but let's not lose sight of these fundamental inequalities that exist. So I would yeah, I would say any if effective programme around that says yes, OK, let's look at our individual differences and similarities and how we you know, need to work on those to, to get synergy for the work force but let's not forget that there are (..) you know, there are all kinds of dangers about talking about women as a homogenous group, black people as a homogenous group but never the less, there there are certain patterns of disadvantage that are readily discernible and I think those have to be looked at.

*INT: THAT'S, THAT IS SOMETHING THAT I'VE FOUND, THAT IF YOU ASK AN INDIVIDUAL NOBODY WANTS TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH THAT GROUP, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE SAYING WELL YOU'RE AN UNDER-PRIVILEGED GROUP OR A DISADVANTAGED GROUP, THEY DON'T WANT TO BE A MEMBER OF THAT GROUP AT ALL, SO I CAN SEE THE ADVANTAGE OF DIVERSITY THERE BUT LIKE YOU SAID IT JUST DOESN'T (..) I MEAN THE PROBLEM I'M FINDING WITH ALL OF THIS IS HOW DO YOU EVER MEASURE THAT IT'S MADE ANY DIFFERENCE? LIKE YOU SAID THERE'S NO LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH AND SO, IF I WAS AN EMPLOYER AND HOLDING THE PURSE STRINGS, WHAT'S TO STOP ME JUST EMPLOYING PEOPLE THAT I LIKE, OR I GET ON WITH, OR WHO I THINK CAN DO THE JOB AND JUST LEAVE THEM TO GET ON WITH EACH OTHER? YOU KNOW, WHY SHOULD I SPEND THAT MONEY ON MONITORING AND POLICIES AND ALL THE REST OF IT, WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

***P23:** (..) Because you won't survive basically. I mean there are, there's a sort of shortage of things, you know there aren't going to be enough white, able-bodied young men coming through schools and universities with the appropriate qualifications in the next ten, twenty years, so employers have got to get, even those that have not traditionally or those who have been unwilling to employ...

***INT:** BUT IF I SELECT ON MERIT FROM THE WHOLE POOL, SO I'M NOT JUST SELECTING WHITE MALES, ABLE-BODIED, AGED 20 – 35 OR WHATEVER AND THEN, SO I HAVE A DIVERSE WORKFORCE BUT I DON'T PUT ANY STRICT POLICIES IN PARTICULAR – YOU GOT THE JOB BECAUSE YOU DESERVE THE JOB FULL STOP.

***P23:** Well it's, I mean I, you could say draw an analogy with my football team, Spurs, who are a talent, a collection of very talented internationals but umm seem to be completely unable to play together to achieve any sort of results and I think it would be exactly the same there. You can have a group of individuals who may well have talent and abilities but will be completely unrealised because they'll be coming to that with embedded prejudices and stereotypes as a result of upbringing and background and whatever else. Until you can actually work on their, on (..) their attitudes and skills, I mean certainly their attitudes towards valuing and respecting each other but I mean there are also very easy practical skills, like how do you get the best out of a diverse team. I mean say something like brainstorming, it's a well considered management tool but if you think about it, it clearly disadvantages people who are not spontaneous and ready to (..)

***INT:** SHOUT!

***P23:** Shout, yeah. Those you know, if you think about like the Colper's learning cycle, think about the reflectors and that then you know they're clearly disadvantaged by that kind of process.

***INT:** SO THAT WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY THAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT RATHER THAN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TRAINING LET'S SAY?

***P23:** Yes except I'm reluctant to sort of separate the two. But I I would say that that would apply to equal opportunities training as well as.

***INT:** SO IF YOU'VE GOT A BUNCH OF PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER WHO ARE DIVERSE IN WHATEVER SENSE AND YOU JUST LEAVE THEM BE TO GET ON WITH THEIR JOBS, DO YOU THINK IT CREATES PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATION BASICALLY, THAT THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER?

***P23:** Well I don't we intuitively know how to communicate. Because we can all speak, well most of us can all speak and listen and see, that doesn't mean that we're effective communicators. I think we have to learn how to use these skills.

***INT:** RIGHT. SO THEN YOU IMPLEMENT A POLICY AND SAY THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT AND YOU THEN RAISE THE AWARENESS BECAUSE I'VE DONE THIS AND IF YOU DON'T COMMUNICATE IN A WAY THAT WE THINK INDICATES RESPECT, THEN THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU. SO THERE'S A PUNISHMENT ELEMENT BROUGHT IN AND IT STOPS YOU COMMUNICATING PROPERLY BECAUSE YOU'RE SCARED OF THE PUNISHMENT IF YOU DON'T GET IT RIGHT.

***P23:** People have got to want to do it. And people have got to see the benefits of it. It's no good saying you've got to respect your fellow workers because that's in line with the organisation's corporate goals. Umm, you know, people have (..) people have got to become STAKEHOLDERS in their corporate goals and see what the benefits are to them! (P23 ALMOST LAUGHS AS HE SAYS THIS – I THINK HE REALISED AS HE SAID IT HOW UNREALISTIC IT SOUNDED).

***INT:** YEAH AND WHAT BENEFIT DOES IT BRING TO AN INDIVIDUAL?

***P23:** If you're working for an organisation that's successful, then that organisation is going to stay in business, you're going to stay in a job. You're, whether that actually brings you financial benefits or not is debatable but your, you'll have been working for a successful team rather than an unsuccessful team and that's generally a more positive experience for people.

***INT: SO WHAT DOES THAT POSITIVE EXPERIENCE BRING? IS IT (..) I'M TRYING TO LOOK FOR VARIABLES THAT MIGHT MEASURE THEM, LIKE JOB SATISFACTION OR ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT, AND DOES IT REDUCE ATTRITION LEVELS FOR ORGANISATIONS?**

***P23: I would expect it to yeah. I think increasingly that's, that's an issue because where people are (..) where financial incentives and automatic career progression umm is less likely than 15-20 years ago, umm (..) people will need other things to make them feel that they are enjoying their work. And you know that that might be employee development schemes where you know, people are doing either vocational or non-vocational studies or just simply the sense of (..) being a member of a successful team that values people. I mean that's something I, I mean I work for myself but I can think of organisations where I've worked where people enjoyed being there and I enjoyed being there and places where I worked when people didn't and I didn't and I know, I can think which is the more agreeable experience! (laughs)**

***INT: YEAH. BUT WAS THAT DOWN TO THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STANCE THAT THE ORGANISATION ADOPTED?**

***P23: (..) It was down to a culture rather than anything that was down on policy. It was one actually had a (..) people naturally valued and respected each other, well not naturally, I mean, we came to as a result of various activities.**

***INT: LIKE TRAINING INTERVENTIONS?**

***P23: Yeah, not not specifically to do with equality but umm say other experiences where you can appreciate qualities that might not be immediately apparent and vice versa.**

***INT: YOU SEE THAT'S THE DIFFICULTY I HAVE IN LOOKING FOR BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN EQUALITY IS REALLY DIFFICULT BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO PLAY SUCH A SMALL PART AND IT'S WRAPPED UP WITH SO MANY OTHER THINGS THAT IT'S NEVER GOING TO BE MEASURABLE. SO YOU CAN'T GO IN AND SELL IT ON THE BASIS OF "IT WILL BRING YOU THIS" BECAUSE IT MIGHT NOT. IF YOU GET A BUNCH OF PEOPLE WHO**

HAVE SUCH DEEPLY ENTRENCHED ATTITUDES THAT THEY HAVE NO DESIRE THEN POLICY TRAINING OR WHATEVER IS NEVER GOING TO MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE. AND YOU STILL, EVEN IF YOU HAVE PEOPLE WHO DO GENUINELY GET ON WITH EACH OTHER THEN YOU PROBABLY WOULDN'T NEED THE TRAINING INTERVENTIONS BECAUSE THEY WOULD DO IT ANYWAY. YOU KNOW IF YOU'RE A GOOD COMMUNICATOR OR WHATEVER. SO IT'S REALLY HARD FOR ME TO SAY THESE ARE THE BENEFITS.

*P23: They umm, yeah, I mean it's intangible. It's very difficult to say this is what there will be. I I can sort of come up with a complete list and say yes, you know, people will have a (..) a greater understanding of their rights and responsibilities under a company's policies, blah blah blah they will you know be able to identify a behaviour that could be unacceptable in the work place. They could develop tactics for dealing, and strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. You know, they could become aware of what prejudice, discrimination and institutional racism means and make sure again look at strategies for making sure that doesn't occur in their work. So yeah, I mean at one level you can list all the benefits umm but the organisation that's buying that has got to be clear of in the first place because if they said, right now we've got no problem and we treat everyone fairly here, then they're not going to see it. And I guess that's why the diversity approach has some benefits because people can say, oh yes, well we are all different and how do those differences all mesh together?

*INT: SO HOW MUCH OF A MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYERS DO YOU THINK SHIFTING RESPONSIBILITY FROM THEM TO THEIR EMPLOYEES IS, IN THAT IF YOU TRAIN SOMEBODY AND THEY TICK THE BOX TO SAY THEY'VE DONE THE TRAINING AND THEN THEY MAKE A MISTAKE THAT RESULTS IN COURT ACTION OR INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNAL OR WHATEVER, THEY CAN SAY, WELL WE, YOU KNOW, LIKE THE CAA DIDN'T, WE PROVIDED ADEQUATE TRAINING?

*P23: I think it's a considerable incentive! (laughs)

*INT: YEAH. DO YOU THINK THAT'S THE MAJOR MOTIVATION?

***P23:** (..) I think it depends umm. I think that in many organisations as say as diverse as the Ministry of Defence to a local authority, there are people who genuinely believe from an ethical and moral point of view that equality of opportunity, valuing of differences, whatever label we put on it, IS the right thing to do. There is no question about it. Umm (..) but I also think that there are people who (..) might think that it's the right thing to do but (..) find it more difficult to do umm, so they'll come up with more pragmatic reasons for not doing it. So, the kind of example that you've just mentioned, about vicarious liability (..) that can be used to motivate those people who are not so willing. And yes, I'm sure the the fear of litigation is is enormous. I mean you just have to when uhh something like the Texaco thing in the States came through. I can't remember but it was enormous, thirteen million dollars?

***INT:** I DON'T KNOW.

***P23:** I mean huge. Yeah I mean, it, it made people stop. Umm and in many ways I feel (..) opportunistic or pragmatic about that, that I think that once people undertake some training they then see the benefits, so whatever motivates them to do it in the first place is irrelevant. And whether it is fear of litigation or whether it is because they want to do the right thing, doesn't really matter.

***INT:** IT'S JUST THAT I NOTICE THAT MOST OF THE LARGE COMPANIES IN THE U.K. WHO ARE MAKING SOME SORT OF STATEMENT TEND TO BE AMERICAN OWNED, WHERE THEY DO IT IN THE STATES, SO THEY JUST DO IT GLOBALLY. I HAVEN'T, I DON'T KNOW OF ANY UK COMPANIES WHO (INAUD)

***P23:** Cadbury's are British aren't they? Yeah, some years ago, there was something a group of ten. I think the Rover group and Cadbury's and there were about ten companies who got together and umm, I think that must have been at the end of the eighties.

***INT:** YEAH. I MUST LOOK THAT UP. (..) SO THERE IS A BIT OF ALTRUISM GOING ON THEN?

***P23:** Hmm.

***INT: BUT THERE IS A STRICT BUSINESS CASE AS WELL?**

***P23:** I would say that the (..) yeah, I would say the business case uhh, people's awareness of the business case has increased considerably. Umm (..) plus, yeah I mean I think there three prongs; there's the sort of ethical thing to do and I think there's been, I think being ethical is much more fashionable than it was. And it's a cynical way of putting it but I mean there's (..) if you look at you know, all the sort of financial schemes to buy ethical shares and whatever umm, I understand that's increasing significantly. So just the same I think there's (..) umm one interesting thing is that some research claims that women are more ethical than men generally, so if you get more women in organisations then organisations will then become more ethical! (laughs) which is an interesting one to ponder. Umm (..) so yeah, I think this whole sort of like question of corporate citizenship and that. So like, if you, say like, like say Shell is looking say at corporate citizenship, then Exxon will have to anyway because they're going to be, because will there be any competitive advantage in looking at corporate citizenship so I think if one major player does it then the others will do it.

INTERVIEWER AND PARTICIPANT TALK REFER EACH OTHER TO RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS.

***INT: O.K. WELL I'M CONSCIOUS OF THE TIME, SO I'LL LEAVE IT THERE.**

***P23:** Well I've got about another ten minutes, so if there is anything else.

***INT: I THINK THE ONLY THING I'VE SKIMPED ON IS HOW YOU THINK EMPLOYEES PERCEIVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY.**

***P23:** (..) Certain comments stick in my head. (..) I think of this black guy in this manufacturing company who was in his like early fifties and at the start of an equal opportunities course I'd ask people to say what they wanted to get out of the day and he just said, "It's 1997 (laughs) how come it's taken so bloody long to get round to realising there are black people in this company?" (laughs) So umm, that was one point of view and another point of view was umm, what's the problem, you know, we all get on alright, so why do we have training in the first place?

***INT: YEAH. AND DO YOU HAVE MUCH OF A RANGE WITHIN OR DOES IT FALL ROUGHLY INTO TWO CAMPS?**

***P23: Yeah. Yeah I, I, as a generalisation I would say that in most organisations women and black employees think there's an overdue need, that there are all sorts of things that need to be sorted out and the majority of, by no means all, but the majority of white people think that there are no problems and ranging through to some people just think you're going to stir things up by having the training in the first place.**

***INT: THAT'S PRETTY MUCH WHAT I FOUND FROM MY FIRST STUDY TOO. ARE YOU AWARE OF PEOPLE NOT WANTING TO BELONG TO THOSE GROUPS AND SAY THAT I PERSONALLY HAVEN'T EXPERIENCED IT BUT I KNOW THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM, DO YOU GET A LOT OF THAT?**

***P23: Yes. And I think too it reflects much broader cultures that within the same organisation, there are plants where people feel quite free to express (..) concerns and others that they realise it's in their best interests to keep quiet. No matter how much they (..) no matter how unhappy they are, they'd sooner have a quiet and unhappy life than a you know disrupted and unhappy life.**

***INT: YEAH. SO HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE ULTIMATELY DO YOU THINK A POLICY CAN MAKE TO PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR?**

***P23: I think it can make a lot. I think if you take it at a very sort of simple behaviourist level, like an organisation that has say banned pin-ups umm, people come into that organisation and see that that is the norm so they won't then put their pin-ups up. So over a period of time you you will affect a change.**

***INT: WHAT ABOUT ATTITUDES?**

***P23: Umm, I don't, I I, I think as a result of that behavioural change, you, the attitudes will be affected too in the long term. I I don't think within a sort of working culture, unless we're going to increase by about 100% the amount of time people go off in training, we've got time to worry about attitudes. You've got to go for the behaviourist approach.**

***INT: DO THINK THERE WILL A NATURAL EVOLUTION OR A CHANGING OF ATTITUDES AS BEHAVIOUR CHANGES THOUGH? LIKE IN TEN YEARS TIME, OR TWENTY YEARS, WE WON'T BE HAVING THIS CONVERSATION.**

***P23: I'm sure we will because it's not consistent. And and you know, and also in the other side of globalisation, people moving around, you get people saying, oh this is quite – I can think of a New Zealand doctor umm, it's actually a sexual harassment case but then all sorts of other things came out about what he talked to patients about and he said oh you know, just because you Brits are so stuffy, you know, that's quite normal where I come from to use that kind of language. You know which may have been true or may not have been true. So yeah, I think there's going to be umm I don't think it will go away because people (..)**

***INT: ENTRENCHED SO DEEPLY IN PEOPLE.**

***P23: Yeah and also you know, just people (..) people's experience umm. Most most people but by no means all people go to co-educational schools but I mean there's still a significant number of public schools that are turning out girls only, boys only umm and even if they, if they go to university and students are mixed, they may, you know it's still (..) relatively little mixing and certainly it will be within the same social grouping umm, so you know, I think yeah. I mean equally you're getting people growing up in areas of the UK that are still predominantly white, certainly maybe all of their friends will be white umm, so totally ill-equipped to then go to an urban area and work with a multi-racial workforce. You know, not to mention going out around the world. So no. I think you and I will have a job for years to come! (laughs). It's a bit like being an undertaker I suspect!**

PARTICIPANT NO. 24 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

***INT: OK, IF YOU COULD START BY BRIEFLY OUTLINING WHAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IS.**

***P24: You want my current involvement?**

***INT: YES PLEASE.**

***P24: Here at [town name] Racial Equality Council I'm the Director. So my role involves working with the community, the Local Authority community. Finding out the needs that they have within [town name] and also finding out what they can contribute as individuals as as umm local residents within the area, within the economy and getting a balance between the two because too often we tend to look at it one-sided and we forget that the ethnic minority has a lot to contribute as well. That's one aspect of my role. Another aspect is working with umm with the Local Authority, the Chamber of Commerce and so on, looking at the policies that they have for equal opportunities and ensuring that it's not just words, that it's working in practice as well, which is usually the difficult bit! And so that's the, that's on those two fronts and we also work with the schools. And try and work with, it's more an education point of view, encouraging the youngsters to not just see themselves as a minority group but also being aware that now that they are coming out of that role of you know ethnic minority people are in a small community, we can't really stand up for ourselves, they're learning to do that now. And what we need to do is to work with them to help them to assert themselves in a better manner. And the general day to day job is individual complaints. People knock on the door or they write a letter in or they ring up and say I've been having problems with umm racial harassment, or my employer isn't treating me fairly, what can you do for us? And so we get involved working on the individual side as well.**

***INT: SO WHAT SORT OF BALANCE DO YOU GET BETWEEN PRIVATE PEOPLE COMING IN AND ORGANISATIONS ASKING FOR HELP?**

***P24:** Umm it tends to be a follow-through more than anything else. We tend to have the, more often than not it will start with the individuals coming to us and saying that they have a challenge. And it's for us to now work with that individual and see what is the best way forward for them. As much as we're aware that the law, the Race Relations Act 1976 says that it's illegal to treat anyone unfairly, and there's all the other bits of things in between that, as soon as someone appears on our doorstep, you sort of look at the information that they're bringing to you and in your own mind set you know they have a case to take forward, either to Industrial Tribunal or back to the organisation and literally request that they are treated fairly and expect redress in some format. But if the individual is timid about doing that, we cannot force them to take up that responsibility. If they say, well I don't want to be singled out then we have to stand back. So in that case what we tend to find is that we have the individual come to us with a problem situation, we work with them, help them to understand the, where they stand within the law, umm advise them of all the different aspects of the law that they can actually apply and then ask them, what do you want to do about it? And it either will be a matter of yes, I want to go to an industrial tribunal, in which case we will work with them on that angle, or they might have said, no I don't want to go that far but I want something done, in which case we will make contact with the organisation and say, are you aware that one of your employees is going through this situation, what do you plan to do with this? And only this week in fact, yesterday I was talking to another client who then turned round and says, the actual MD of the organisation because we go straight to the top, we don't just ring the line manager because there's no point because all you get is something stifled, so, this person said, well to be quite honest, we don't know what to do about this, can you help? And that has been the follow through, so now, instead of working with the client, who didn't want to challenge anyway, you know, we went back to them and said look, this is what they're requesting, how do you feel and he said well yeah, that will work for me, and as long as it doesn't point directly to me, so now it's moved from an individual complainant to an organisation now saying help. So the balance will differ according to how the employers respond.

***INT:** THAT'S A VERY COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE THAT YOU'RE OFFERING THEN.

***P24:** Yeah, it's a total service. What tends to happen is that the, for years the Racial Equality Council and certainly the Commission for Racial Equality, our parent company, our parent organisation is seen as though uhh we're coming in you know with a cudgel and having a go at people. That's not what we're about. Our aim is to eliminate racial discrimination where ever we can. Now that's a tall order. It's not going to disappear overnight. You're talking about generations of inbred feelings and personalities. But what we want to do is to bring it to people's attention and say do you realise the affect you're having on people when you behave in certain ways? And if they're willing to sit down and listen to us and talk it through then we say well let's work together to deal with it. You know, you might think well what makes us the expert, I think well one of the reasons is because we felt it. We've lived through it and what we're saying is that we've climbed past it, we've gone around it, we've gone above it, we've worked our way up and now we want to turn back and help the people coming behind us, all those who don't have that strength and say, let's work for a fair society and let's do it together. And if the organisations are willing to do that, then yes that's what we'll come in for. So we're saying we're not just here to have a go, we're also here to put a remedy in place.

***INT:** SO DO YOU GET COMPANIES, COMMERCIAL ORGANISATIONS APPROACHING YOU OFF THE STREET IF YOU LIKE, SAYING WE WOULD REALLY LIKE TO WORK TOWARDS THIS BUT WE DON'T KNOW HOW?

***P24:** We do sometimes yeah. Some organisations will do actually make the contact directly. It tends to be very carefully made because you know the concern is that once they're raised the issue with us is that we'll suspect there's something going wrong. And we have to you know we have pick the words out in between and say well, is there a challenge? And say well not quite, you know, are you aware what we can do for you? And then the conversation turns around in that way. And then yes, we will then go in and work with them. And we always say to organisations that if we find a problem while we're in there working with you, then you have us on the doorstep already. We can deal with it. But at the same time, even if we build a good relationship with an organisation and everything is working well with them, if suddenly out of left wing a case comes up, we're not going to sit there and say well this is a good organisation, we

can't do anything about it, we will go back in with a law book. But we're very honest up front when we work with organisations. We say, look, this is what we'll do for you but if someone comes to us at the end of the day we have to handle that case, we have to deal with them, it's just the magnitude of it may change.

***INT: YEAH. WELL YOU HAVE NO INTEREST IN MISREPRESENTING YOURSELVES TO THEM.**

***P24: No, that's not what it's for. I mean and then the other side, if we, if a company is not willing to listen to us and the umm individual complainant says yes I do want to go forward with an industrial tribunal, then we will work them too as far as the expertise is within this office. If it gets to the point that it's a massive case and it's going to take two or three weeks at the industrial tribunal then we have the Citizen's Advice Bureau, fortunately housed in this building! We're all in the same building, so we have them who will help us, so we have the back up of the Commission for Racial Equality, who have a legal department, who will take those type of cases of our hands. And that will free us to work with the other cases. So we have to stop and think of the manpower as well; how much resource do we have here and can we really take on anything that is going to keep us tied up in court for two or three weeks? And the truth is within this particular REC we cannot take up a case that size because it's myself and two secretaries whereas in most areas, when you go to some areas the REC they have a case worker and they will focus solely on that and the director is free to get on with other uhh besides. I don't have that luxury so it means I sometimes have to pass the cases on. But umm we keep tabs and see how it's going. And once that case is sorted out to the complainant and the respondent, that's the employee and the employer, to an amicable solution between them, we will allow a period, a cooling off period of maybe two, three months, it could take up to six months, it depends on how, you know, messy the case might have been, and then we go back to the organisation and say well in light of what happened back there, can we now work with you to make sure it doesn't happen again. And you know, sometimes it's not that easy to get back in there so we have to be very professional in the way we deal with organisations. We cannot go and take it personally and sort of get in there and make a big fuss. Umm at the same time, we have to be fair**

to our client. So it's getting that balance right, you know, you just have to be professional in every operation that you make.

***INT: SO WHEN A COMPANY HAS APPROACHED YOU TO ASK FOR HELP, IS IT USUALLY BECAUSE THEY SUSPECT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG OR ARE THERE SOME GENUINELY FORWARD THINKING EMPLOYERS WHO WOULD JUST LIKE TO BE DOING THINGS PROPERLY OUT OF (..) GOODNESS OF HEART?**

***P24: It's a mixture of both, it really is. A lot of companies are under the impression that they have a good working policy in their organisation. And they're right. They have a good policy. It doesn't necessarily work within the organisation. The policies are put in there because they need to put their minimum in in there to say that they are going to do something about equal opportunities. You probably find if you see adverts and so on, companies say we are an equal opportunities organisation and you think, great, let's go and work for that company. It is just a line. And it's not because, I wouldn't sit and say it's because they don't care, I think in most cases they don't know. And that's what it comes down to. So sometimes when they approach us, it could be that they genuinely want to make sure everything is ok. It could be they're about to tender for a big bid and in there it says what's your equal opportunities policy and practice, and suddenly they think, what is it! Or it could well be that something has actually come up. A problem has arise, they've managed to sort it out within the organisation and they're now thinking, what are we going to do if it happens again? You know, it's like if you have a fire in the corner of a room somewhere you know you then send for, you know, you get the fire experts to come and check the place out and you put something place.**

***INT: YEAH, YOU CALL IN A TEAM WHO KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT.**

***P24: Well hopefully we would like them to use us earlier enough so we put in the fire extinguishers before the fire starts (laughs) but it doesn't always happen! But no I would say yes, there are a few forward thinking companies out there who try their best to make things right.**

***INT: SO ARE THEY DOING IT AS WELL TO AVOID LITIGATION AND TO MAKE SURE THEY'RE NOT MAKING THESE MISTAKES THAT WILL TAKE THEM TO A TRIBUNAL, OR DO THEY SEE SOME POSITIVE BENEFITS OUTSIDE OF...**

***P24: The first point of, umm of thought is with regard to the cost. It's the cost not just the financial cost, whereas you know the industrial tribunal side, but it's that indirect cost as well which takes place within the organisation. If you have a department where there's racial harassment going on, I mean in most cases it tends to be very subtle. You tend to find that no-one is actually saying anything but they're excluding people. You know, conversation dries up when you walk into the room, or the work programme goes to one area and you sit there twiddling your thumbs, or you get all the difficult work while they sit there twiddling their thumbs. Those are the sort of subtle things which umm a person, the person who is suffering that cannot say directly "I am being discriminated against".**

***INT: YES. IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO KEEP TABS.**

***P24: Yes. There's nothing they can put their hand on. But what is it doing to the morale of that group? Yeah? Suddenly this individual is either producing less because they're in that total state of anxiety, or they're working like mad, just to try and look better or look as good as everybody else, or they're taking a lot of time off and that again, I suppose is a sort of hidden cost that we say to organisations, be aware that we're not just talking about going to industrial tribunal and getting your name in the paper as a horrible employer, it's also looking at the effect you're having on the people in your organisation. And those around them, you tend to find where there's this type of umm harassment going on, or this umm inequality of behaviour, there will be other members of the team who are witnessing it but don't know what to do about it. So they're just as distressed about it as the person who is suffering the abuse directly. So it's really getting (inaud) to look at it either side.**

***INT: SO DO YOU ACTUALLY SEE THAT? BECAUSE I KNOW THIS IS VERY MUCH WHAT THE BUSINESS CASE IS BASED ON. YES IT'S THE AVOIDANCE OF THE COST OF DISCRIMINATING BUT THERE'S ALL OF**

THESE, THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN YOUR EMPLOYEES AND THE POSSIBLE IMPACT ON TURNOVER LEVELS, OR PRODUCTIVITY OR PERFORMANCE BUT THERE'S VERY VERY LITTLE INFORMATION OR EVIDENCE OF IT ACTUALLY DOING THAT. I MEAN IT INTUITIVELY MAKES SENSE BUT HAVE YOU SEEN IT HAPPEN?

***P24:** We have had cases recorded. We have a booklet that we use that the Commission for Racial Equality put out, called umm Harassment at Work. And in there it gives all the different stages of harassment that can take place – where it starts from, how it develops and it's interspersed with a number of case studies where organisations have been taken to industrial tribunal where those sorts of situations have occurred. And and also what the cost was, you know how much has been paid back, so yes there are evidence to support that fact, that it is both sides, there's the financial cost and there's the indirect cost as well.

***INT:** AND HAVE YOU PERSONALLY NOTICED IT WHEN YOU'VE BEEN WORKING IN THE FIELD?

***P24:** I've noticed it as an employee, within an organisation before I came here because I was responsible for putting together a network, an ethnic minority network within that organisation because I saw, I witnessed that discrimination was taking place and about three of us were picked out to go and work with a number of the employees and ask them, well what can we do, what can the company do about it. And in going into that scenario it was really strange because what we did is that we had a one day focus group with the ethnic minority community umm and what we, we, that's the community in the organisation and in order to do that, the first thing we noticed that they were being challenged by was just that when we called them out, when we tried to find out where they were, so we could get enough people around for this focus group to take place, it was, no-one can tell us where the ethnic minority people were employed. It wasn't recorded. So eventually we thought well OK we'll use our own personal network, so I'll talk to someone who knows someone who knows someone and we managed to get a group together. And then the request was made to us, well does my manager need to know that I'm coming to this? And that was the first sign that we saw that people were feeling put upon. And so we OK, if you want to take a day off, or if you want to book

for something else, by all means, the choice is yours but we need to hear what you have to say. And some people actually booked a day off but came back because we were based at a different building and they came to this other building for this meeting because they wanted to have their say but they didn't want anyone to know that they were getting involved with that project because they'd be picked out.

***INT: THAT'S SUCH A SHAME.**

***P24: Yeah and that that was the first time that we really saw it because what you tend to find is that within the ethnic minority population there is a group of people who face discrimination but literally side-step it as I was mentioning before because they think, OK, if that's how you want to behave, you carry on and behave like that and I'm going to get on with my job. I've got a purpose as to why I'm in this organisation, I know where I'm aiming for in my career and nothing is going to stop me from doing it.**

***INT: SO THAT MAKES THEIR OBJECTIVES VERY PERSONAL RATHER THAN FOR THE COMMUNITY OR THE ORGANISATION.**

***P24: That's right. That's right. And they get on and they succeed. They succeed. But then there's another group that does not have that foresight because they, they feel bruised. And they think well everything I try I'm being knocked down. And they get to the point where they become, someone has put them in a box and said this is who you are and you can't do anything else and they start believing that that's true. So by then when they believe that it means they're actually trapped themselves mentally. And what we try to do umm is particularly when we were trying to run that group is that we sat down and we said, well how did we get out of that box because someone must have put us in there as well. And we realised that we took different steps and we climbed our way around it and then we went back and said well let's teach these people to recognise where they are and also recognise where they can go. And let's work with them to help them to build out of that. And that's what we did.**

***INT: SO DID IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE THEN, HAVING PUT SOME KIND OF INTERVENTION IN PLACE?**

***P24:** It made a major difference. It took us about eighteen months to get the first group off the ground. We managed to get the questionnaire, umm the focus group going, we did three focus group and we targeted London, Manchester and Birmingham because this was a national project we were working on. And we spoke to individuals and we noticed that there was a difference in those different cities as well.

***INT:** REALLY?

***P24:** Yeah, people responded differently.

***INT:** IN WHAT RESPECT?

***P24:** Uhh in what we found in the south, people were more forthright with their comments. When we reached Manchester they were more reluctant to make comments. And in the end, the only way we could get them to talk was that we had to put our books and our pens down and make out that we weren't making any notes but we had to. At the end of the meeting we sat in our cars and wrote down everything, thinking, well what did they say! (laughs). Because we weren't getting anything out of them. They just were not prepared to talk. They didn't know US because we came from the South East and they didn't know if we were going to roll them over, or if we had rolled over, so that was another difficulty. But in the end we got sufficient material to put a paper forward to the management board and they agreed then, yes we should go forward and form this network. So people asked for the network. And we said tot hem that will work. And we said that if we can make contact with the other ethnic minority people in the organisation, umm whereas in the south and the south east they were all concentrated in one area and the further north you go the more scattered they were and it was the ones in the north who asked for it more. So if we can link up then when there's a problem, rather than sit in a corner and sulk, I can call you and I can talk it through with you, I can get my emotions out and then I can look at the facts: am I really been discriminated against? And we thought that was very, you know, very adult way of looking at something, and we put that down as one of the proposals as to why they wanted this network. And a few other points were put forward and the management board agreed to it. They said go ahead, form the network.

*INT: THAT'S VERY INTERESTING YOU FOUND A GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCE AS WELL.

*P24: Quite a difference. The further north you go is say more intense, more, I wouldn't say it's more intense, it's more insular, you find the individuals.

*INT: MUCH MORE UMM FULL COMMUNITY YOU FIND THERE, RATHER THAN INTERSPERSED AROUND A TOWN?

*P24: Yeah, it's so different. And their behaviour, their reaction to umm to discrimination within the work place umm in shops, out on the main street, it varies, it differs between the north and the south. You know, it's still, even within the discrimination side it's still a north-south divide! (laughs) You think why? But there is, different degrees.

*INT: NOW I KNOW I WAS AMAZED WHEN I WAS DOING THE FIRST PART OF THIS STUDY JUST TO FIND, OR TO REALISE HOW MUCH FEAR IS SURROUNDING ALL OF THESE ISSUES STILL AND HOW MUCH OF A TABOO IT IS TO SAY YES, I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN, OR TO DRAW ATTENTION TO YOURSELF. LIKE YOU SAY, NOBODY KNEW YOU SO THEY DIDN'T TRUST YOUR AIMS, THEY WERE UNSURE TO SAY ANYTHING PERSONAL. AND WHAT I FOUND IS WHEN I WAS ASKING PEOPLE, HAVE YOU PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED ANY DISCRIMINATION, NOBODY WANTED TO SAY YES. IT WAS NEVER ME – TO SAY ME MEANS THAT YOU'RE EITHER A VICTIM OR THAT YOU'RE, YOU'VE BEEN PUT THERE ON A TOKEN BASIS, OR THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE GOT YOUR JOB THROUGH POSITIVE ACTION, OR THAT MIGHT, YOU KNOW, IT JUST OPENED SO MANY AVENUES THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO GO DOWN.

*P24: That's right.

*INT: IT'S LIKE, I'M JUST A PERSON, I'M DOING MY JOB, I'M DOING MY JOB REGARDLESS OF WHAT GOES ON AROUND AND THAT WAS IT, A COMPLETE CUT OFF FOR THEM.

*P24: Umm, you need to see it as well as, that on one hand they don't want to be identified but on the other hand, it's a survival mechanism. You know? It's a matter of, if I put my head down and don't get involved, I'll be OK. Yeah? And you'll find if there's one ethnic minority person in a group of all non-ethnic minority people, that person will probably manage to get on much better amongst that group, until another ethnic minority person joins the group. And you suddenly think, well surely that should make it easier, but it doesn't because the one person that find themselves in a situation where things are OK, there might be the odd racist remarks being made but you think, I shan't rock the boat. You know, they might make the odd comment and you think I don't really like that statement but they wouldn't do anything else about it. Well when a second person come on board and there's two people now and the racist comment is made, one's looking to the other one to respond. One might be bolshy enough, I use that word because that's the way I describe myself more often than not! (laughs) and so, I'm not going to put up with that statement but the other person is now thinking, No, don't say anything, you know, I've lived with this all this time and I've managed to make it, don't you come and start shaking it here. And then you have a division between the two people who should really be pulling together and say, let's educate this group. Instead what we get is let's fight each other because I'm so busy fighting the other group, or I'm so busy keeping my nose clean, you know, and you've just come and messed it all up for me. And that is such a shame and it really is, again, it's, it's a, it's that survival mechanism that we build up around us and say, how am I going to best cope with this? And as I said, you tend to find that as you talk to the different people from ethnic minority background who's climbed past that, they've probably said no, I haven't experienced anything because they really believe that they haven't experienced anything, because the survival mechanism is so well established that they don't notice when people are being, or they choose not to notice. But yeah, I mean, I have found myself in situations where people have been discriminating against me and what I've done is stood up and say, I, you know, up with this I will not put! (laughs) you know, forget it! And what the outcome would be, or the way in which I myself have handled it before is that I would make my stand and move. Yeah, that has been my my growing. I make my stand and I move out of the area. And then if anything goes wrong, I make my stand and I move out of the area. Now, what this has done for me at the end of the

day is give me a number of different strategies to use because I've experienced it in so many different ways but it's helped me to gather so much experience that I can now walk into an organisation with a vast amount of experience in all sorts of work areas and say, this is what I could do for you. So it's benefited me in some ways. Yeah? Yeah. But now it's the point of the past six years or so, I've literally been focusing and going back into these organisations and saying, wait a minute, there's still people behind who haven't found that strategy as yet, so what I do is share my strategy with others and say this is what worked for me.

***INT: THERE'S ALSO THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT TO MOVE AS WELL AND THEY KNOW THAT IF THEY KICK UP A FUSS THEN ULTIMATELY THEY WILL HAVE TO AND THAT'S TOO MUCH UPHEAVAL FOR THEM AND SO THEY SAY NOTHING.**

***P24: You get it anywhere, yeah. I mean and certainly in this type of job because within [town name] this is seen, this is the same in most areas where the REC is set up, but in [town name] because of the type of community that it is, this job carries quite a high profile, but you still umm, witness when you walk into organisations and people meet up with you, it's like for the first time, it's like, she's a woman, she's black, she's a senior manager, is she for real? And, I relish those moments! (laughs)**

***INT: ARE YOU VERY AWARE OF LIKE A DOUBLE WHAMMY EFFECT THEN?**

***P24: Very aware of it. Very aware of it. Yeah. But the way in which I tackle it is that it's not my problem. It's someone else's problem. Because at the end of the day, I'm there to do a job, I'm professional in what I do and I will not walk into a situation without researching it first. So that at least if there is a challenge, I can take hold of the challenges. When I walk out of there I have people saying, well when can we see you again? You know. But I don't go in there with the intention of 'I have to win these people over'. I go in there with the intention, I have a job to do. Take it or leave it, this is who you have. This is who you were given, what you're going to get. And as I say, the professional edge is what counts more than anything else and as long as you're professional in what you're doing, you can ignore that double whammy. But it is there**

and it would be wrong of me to just pretend it doesn't exist, being aware of it keeps me on my toes.

***INT: YOU SEE I'VE SPOKEN TO SOME TRAINERS, SOME EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TRAINERS RECENTLY, WHO SAY THAT THEY'VE REALLY NOTICED THE CHANGE OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS SAY, WHERE IT USED TO BE A WOMAN, LIKE A WOMAN ENGINEER WOULD BE LOOKED DOWN UPON BY A MALE ENGINEER AND THAT, HE SAID, HE FEELS THAT THERE IS FAR MORE OF A NATURAL EQUALITY BETWEEN THE SEXES NOW, SAY BETWEEN TWENTY-FIVE YEAR OLDS OR SOMETHING. HE SAID THOUGH THAT HE'S NOT CONVINCED THERE'S BEEN THE SAME SHIFT IN ATTITUDES AS FAR AS RACE OR COLOUR IS CONCERNED. HE COULD SEE THE YOUNGER GENERATION BECOMING MORE AWARE THAT THEY SHOULDN'T SAY THESE THINGS OUT LOUD AND MORE CLEVER AT BEING COVERT ABOUT IT BUT THAT HE COULDN'T REALLY SEE ANY REAL CHANGE.**

***P24: The difficulty is still there. The problems are still there, we face it every day. And what organisations like the REC is set up for is to help people deal with those. I mean we've just recently been asked by one of the local secondary schools to come in and do some work with their students and we initially, this started off as a challenge from the, some of the students in their senior year umm writing to us and saying, tell us how to handle this situation.**

***INT: REALLY?**

***P24: And it just created quite a stir. And we said OK fine you know we left it for a whole term, so that, you know as I said we always wait for things to cool down and we went back into the school and we spoke to the head and we said look, they may have stepped over the line by coming direct to us, that might be your view and the way you operate in your school but it doesn't alter the fact that they have made the request. So I'm not here to defend the fact that they've overstepped the line in your eyes, that's for you to deal with because that's how you run your school but what I'm here to say is that I cannot turn down their request because there is a need. And as we talked it through he**

saw the reason behind, he accepted the fact that yes, these youngsters need some guidance. Now I could have walked in there and said, how dare you stop these kids from writing to me!

***INT: AND HE'D HAVE SAID HOW DARE YOU WALK IN HERE!**

***P24: Exactly. Exactly, so you know you have to really think it through and you have to ask yourself who am I doing this for? Yeah? And if I go in there to do it for the REC, those kids would not have got a look in. but because I went in there with the youths in mind, you know, the young people in mind, who said this is what they require, OK, you know you handle them whatever way, but they need this information, what do you have in the school at the moment that will fill this gap? He said well, quite honestly nothing. And I said, well we can bring this or this or this. We'll give you an option, we'll give you a proposal and we'll build it in with your curriculum and we'll work for it. We'll not make it stand out as something additional because they have the (inaud) for the social education side that all the schools do, so we'll put it in that hour, if you're willing to adjust for it. And he said fine. So it ended up with us coming over with a request to do, umm the especial training programme within that particular school but rather than just do it for the senior years, we've been asked to do this for all the tutor groups, which is thirty-two tutor groups in the school, with twenty-five kids in each group! I'm going, yeah we can do that! (laughs) sure!**

***INT: YEAH, WE'VE GOT THREE PEOPLE HERE! (LAUGHS)**

***P24: I came out and sat with my executive committee and screamed! (laughs) We're in the school, that's what we wanted, we're in the school. And now what we need to do is find the resources to deal with it. And umm I have no doubt that we will achieve that. And if we do a good job, then the other schools, we have nine secondary schools in [town name], if we do a good job, they'll be asking for the same thing. And that's that remedial work that we talk about. There are challenges out there that the youngsters are dealing with. We can't suddenly wave a magic wand and put it right but what we can do is teach the young ones coming up how to handle it in a very assertive way so that yes, there's going to be a day when you know, I'm not going to pull any punches about it. There's going to be a day when they're going to be hit with something really hard**

and they might crumble. Because if people are ready to attack you on a racist point of view, they ATTACK you, and they don't realise the pain. I've had people, umm clients coming and they say to me, I don't mind what they give me as a settlement, that's not what I'm for, I just wish someone would take my pain away from me that I'm feeling about the way they treated me. You know? And you look at people and I think, well what can we do for them? They have to live with that feeling. So we're not saying that that's not going to happen, what we're saying is that we have taught them to understand, to look out for it, see it coming, don't get caught off-guard, you know, be prepared.

***INT: SO IT'S A VERY EDUCATIONAL APPROACH TO THIS THEN? AND IT'S THE ETHNIC MINORITIES RATHER THAN THE MAJORITY THAT YOU ARE EDUCATING AS WELL?**

***P24: We're educating both, certainly within the school, we've not segregated the children at all. When we go into the schools, we will work with all, black and white because it is a two-way situation.**

***INT: THAT'S WHAT I WAS THINKING, IF YOU ARE PICKING A GROUP OF PEOPLE BUT THERE'S ALL OF THESE WHO ARE NOT HAVING THEIR AWARENESS RAISED.**

***P24: It's a two-way situation and we will always work with both. And when we work in organisations, we don't work with the people, we work with the policy. And then we inform, we then train the managers to implement and to put that policy into practice, so whatever colour is the management band, that's who we will work with.**

***INT: SO HOW DIFFICULT IS THAT, TO GET A MANAGER TO FOLLOW SOMETHING THROUGH THE LINE? IF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS THAT UMM, IT'S ALL BASED ON VERY DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES OR YOUR MANAGERS, OR WHOMEVER IT IS, BUT HOW DO YOU EVER GET A POLICY TO ACCOUNT FOR THAT KIND OF BEHAVIOUR?**

***P24: It's really a matter of making sure we can buy the top table. Yeah? And you know, buy as in getting them to buy into the idea. And you usually, what I find in**

general and that's from some recent work I've been doing around the country is that we umm, the senior managers are all for equal opportunities.

***INT: IT'S JUST AS IT STARTS FILTERING DOWN?**

***P24:** As it starts floating this way down, that's where the problem comes in. The senior managers want it to work because they can see the profitability of it. Now you have to sell it as a business case. There's no point saying, 'isn't it nice to be good to ethnic minority people?' They don't want to hear that. We have to show them the financial gain of being good to your ethnic minority population. Look around your area that you live in, look around the society. Ask yourself what percentage of the uhh, say you're in, well all companies are in a matter selling a service or product, yeah? So look around the area that you're based at or where you're selling most and see what is the colour of your community, yeah, what's the mix. And then ask yourself who are your sales people. Do they look anything like that community? Do they really know the needs of that community? Do you know the needs of that community? You might be selling clothes in a particular shape and a particular colour but does it meet the shape and the colour coding for that community? Yeah, because everybody comes in different shapes and sizes, yeah, so those are the sort of things that we point out. And then we also say to them, what is the buying power within that community? Because if the majority, we could take [town name] for instance, the majority of the ethnic minority are home owners, yeah, it stands to reason that they must have fairly substantial income, not over the top, but they've got something, enough to keep them going. Look at the amount of cars in [town name], yeah! Every family have two or three cars!

***INT: YEAH, I NEVER OWNED A CAR UNTIL I MOVED HERE!**

***P24:** Yeah, same here (laughs) London was fine, you just jump on the bus. And you look at that sort of situation, you know that there's a certain amount of affluence within the area, OK? There is a lot of poverty in the area as well but there is a certain amount of affluence.

***INT: SO DO THEY BUY THAT AS WELL IF THEY'RE NOT A SALES COMPANY AS SUCH?**

***P24:** They do. They buy it because they want to be an employer of choice. They want the best people to come and work for them so we need to sell the educational level of ethnic minority people as well. Which is, the standard is the norm within the country now and within colleges and universities, ethnic minority youngsters out do, they're over-represented.

***INT:** AT THE EDUCATION LEVEL?

***P24:** At the education level. So if they're over-represented at the education then it stands to reason when they come out, you know, that's the way, that's where you want to recruit from, that's your recruitment base. Yeah? And there's a group, an organisation that I worked as the training director for about a couple of years I spent some time doing some work with them, and they focus on no-one else except the ethnic minority population at universities. And that's every university in the UK, and you're talking Cambridge, Oxford, all of those type of universities and it's purely ethnic minority youngsters. They are the recruitment base for the major companies. And that's who they're going for because these youngsters are going out with 2:is and 2:iis yeah, some of them they're saying, no, please please come and work for my company, and they're saying no, I'm going to do my PhD, can you give me a year off? You know? And we've had companies begging, can you convince them that they should put off their PhDs? And we said no, why should we? You know? If you want them that much, take them on board, finance their PhD and a few companies have actually been doing that.

***INT:** SO THERE IS A BARGAINING POWER GOING ON THEN?

***P24:** There is a bargaining power for ethnic minority employees.

***INT:** BECAUSE THIS WHOLE 'REPUTATION' SEEMS TO BE SOLD AS A KEY POINT OF THE BUSINESS CASE AS WELL BUT I WONDERED HOW MUCH OF A MARKET WE WERE IN ECONOMICALLY THAT PEOPLE REALLY CAN CHOOSE TO THAT LEVEL.

***P24:** They can but they, when you look at that education level, yeah because most organisations want people with degrees. They want people with good qualifications,

you know, able to put themselves forward and when we work with youngsters who's at universities, particularly with that organisation, what they would normally do is rather than just work with them as, getting them into work placements, they actually give them, we ran management development programmes for them. So while they're at university, they're also having the management development programme in the holiday, you know, and they've still got to get the grade.

***INT: SO THEY'RE STREETS AHEAD WHEN THEY COME OUT.**

***P24:** They're streets ahead when they come out. They're not guaranteed a job at the end with the organisation who's sponsoring them for this training but they have the chance and a lot of them in fact tend not to go to those organisations because they realise it's not the type of organisation they want to work for. So they move on and do something else but there's uhh it's, there's a bit extra that we like to do but then we ask the question, why should we have to do that much more?

***INT: WELL YES, AND IT ALSO GETS...**

***P24:** ...because what does it do to you? Because you slugged away and got your degree without all the back up, do you know? But, and it can be seen as very unfair.

***INT: WELL YES...**

***P24:** But when we both walk through the door, what happens?

***INT: YEAH.**

***P24:** That's the reality we live in. That's what we're looking at.

***INT: THAT'S IT. THERE'S JUST SO MANY THINGS THAT COME IN AND OUT FROM IT. I KNOW, I SPOKE TO A HUMAN RESOURCE MAN WHO UMM EMPLOYED PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF THEIR RACE OR ANYTHING ELSE AND HE SAID THAT CATEGORICALLY BUT HE ALSO SAID, I GET THE ADVANTAGE BECAUSE I DO THAT. HE DIDN'T HAVE A STRICT POLICY, OR ANY EO MEASURES IN PLACE, IN FACT HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY POLICY! YOU KNOW, HE FELT HE WAS DOING THE RIGHT THING AND THEN HE**

SAID IN THE MIDST OF THE INTERVIEW WHEN HE'D RELAXED A BIT, 'I WOULD LOSE THE ADVANTAGE IF EVERYONE STOPPED DISCRIMINATING'. HE SAID I'M PICKING FROM THE BEST AND IF EVERYONE WAS TREATED EQUALLY, THERE WON'T BE THAT EXCESS POOL OF TALENT TO STEAL FROM ALMOST. AND I THOUGHT YOU KNOW THAT'S AWFUL BUT THAT'S HOW IT WORKED FOR HIM.

*P24: Companies are actually out there looking for the best, the brightest and more often than not they find them in amongst the ethnic minority population. So yes, it is quite a bargain. I found when we were taking one of the campaigns around the country that, as, I stood on a platform at one point and I thought, I'm selling my people! (laughs) and I thought this doesn't seem right. But it was the only way that you could have got the message over because you have to tell, talk pound signs. And yes, whether a company is in the commercial market or not, they do see it, they do bargain in that way and they do see the reputable side of it. So those are the sorts of aspects that we sell to organisations and say, this is the business case for not discriminating.

*INT: SO ONCE YOU GO INTO A BUSINESS AND YOU PUT A POLICY INTO PLACE WITH A CLIENT AND INVOLVED EVERYONE IN THE PROCESS AND GOT THE HIGHER MANAGEMENT IN THERE, HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE TO BEHAVIOUR DO YOU THINK IT MAKES TO THE EMPLOYEES?

*P24: It's slight because it takes time. It takes time. It is very slight. If we take the, the last organisation that I mentioned where we ran the ethnic minority network, we still had difficulty even once the network was up and running and accepted by the board, recognised as a natural part of working life within the organisation. So if the network was setting up a particular event, it's business as usual, so it's not as if you had to take a day off for it. It it it's, you're given the time to attend these because everything was underwritten by the management board and even so, you still had line managers saying, why should go to that? You had line managers ringing us who were running the network and saying, should we allow those kind of people to get away for a day off? And they didn't know who they were talking to!

*INT: (LAUGHS)

***P24:** They were, it was hilarious, you know, and I said well, what kind of people you mean? My kind of people? (laughs) so yeah, you can change umm the policies and insist that a practice goes on until the practice changes but the people who already have it as you said inbred to behave in such a negative way, you really can't change them. I know some cases, those people were actually asked to leave the company. There have been situations where we know of, at least two or three managers have been told, this sort of behaviour just wouldn't do.

***INT: THEY JUST WEREN'T PREPARED TO CHANGE THEIR ATTITUDES?**

***P24:** They were not prepared to change, even though they knew it was coming from the top. So they were told, well, we don't need your service.

***INT: REALLY? OH THAT'S ENCOURAGING.**

***P24:** Yeah, they actually their company just waved goodbye to them. And when you think about it, well the company was weighing it up. And saying, if I keep this one manager who will not change, how many more people is going to be affected by it? I can afford to lose him. So they just move them out. Yeah, it has happened. It has happened. But in order to get that kind of reaction from organisations, things like that, those kinds of initiatives, networks, whatever you want to call it, has to be producing the best. You know, one of the things that the group have to do is to make sure that everything they did was in line with management structure. So they didn't, they had no affiliation to the union, they had no affiliation to any individual cases of prejudice, there were people, you know the human resource group were responsible for that. It was purely a business case operation. So in some cases the, the, the population that it was set out for were saying, well what are you doing for us? And we said, I'm making a road for you to climb. What you've got to do is get yourself into that road. And it really, you know, even the terms and conditions, everything that was laid out about how that operation was structured, had to be in line with the management. And sometimes, yes it's a game of politics. You have to play it. If that's the game, that's how they, you have to do it. But it's keeping your individuality and that's not easy.

***INT: SO HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TEMPTED TO REDRESS, OR RENAME RATHER, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AS DIVERSITY, MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY?**

***P24: I find diversity, managing diversity is a (..) cosmetic name. I feel it's not calling it what it is, to be quite honest with you. It's easier for people to say managing diversity. And I think in certain (..) face it as it is, because when you say managing diversity you can bury it under all sorts of different things. You know? It's like umm the fact that, I don't know, we can start looking at all the different approaches we we do, you know, how we dress, how we talk, how we, you know, that's a diversity, but it didn't come from there. What it came from was how we treat people. And then if you, once you say diversity, you're then not looking at colour, you're looking right across the board, so colour get pushed in a corner, yeah? I must admit I personally prefer equal opportunities. (laughs) Call it what it is. Let's deal with it straight.**

***INT: SO YOU THINK IT GETS USED A SMOKESCREEN?**

***P24: Yeah, definitely. It's a personal feel. I wouldn't say that's the feel of the CRE or the REC but I personally.**

***INT: YOU'D BE AMAZED HOW MANY PEOPLE SAY THAT.**

***P24: It is a smokescreen.**

***INT: IT'S LIKE YOU COULD HAVE MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY IF YOU HAD A SOLID EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMME ALREADY AND THEN THIS WAS LIKE THE ICING ON THE CAKE. BUT IF YOU JUST GO STRAIGHT TO THAT WITHOUT HAVING ANY FOUNDATION TO IT...**

***P24: No-one actually picks it up. No-one really sees what it's supposed to be but then you can understand that with the terminology. When you say equal opportunities, they KNOW what you're talking about! (laughs). I mean, you know, there was one situation, one sort of statement that's often made by the Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality. He mentioned the fact that we, you know that the organisation had been set up to eliminate this discrimination and one day, we don't know when, it will be**

ideal when there's no longer, when there's no need for this kind of organisation. And if it means that we can get to the point where we could make ourselves redundant, we'd love it! But as long as the world continues the way it's going, there will always (laughs) there's always going to be work for us to do in one way or the other, if not within this context, within a private context or whatever. There will always be a need. That's such a shame. It's such a shame. When you consider how many years we've been trying to work together but umm. You know, there was a point, a time when I used to think, well, this has improved a little bit but I don't really feel like that know. The more people I meet, who's going through the challenge somewhere. It's still there for them. It's still there for them.

***INT: SO WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU'VE MANAGED TO ENCOURAGE A COMPANY TO EMPLOY A MORE DIVERSE WORK FORCE, SO YOU HAVE GOT A MIX OF PEOPLE THAT REPRESENT THE AREAS AROUND, OR WHATEVER BASIS YOU'VE DONE IT ON, AND THEY JUST DON'T GET ON? OR THEY'VE GOT POLICIES IN PLACE AND THEY USE THE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES, SO PEOPLE LOOK FOR THE GAPS ALL THE TIME, WHAT DO YOU DO IN THAT KIND OF SITUATION?**

***P24: Well the main thing is that if we, getting them to to work with the policy, to start putting into practice all the detail, that's the first step. Once it's up and running, we don't just walk away and say get on with it. We try to keep tabs on what's happening. And one of the ways in which we can do that, and umm we haven't done that in [town name] as yet, it's probably more in the medium term before we introduce that because there's a lot of ground work that we still need to do with companies, well one of the things that other umm RECs do is start running a competition. And it's usually to do with best practices. And each year they would award companies for their best practice umm behaviours of whatever sort. So by encouraging the companies to report back every year as to how things are going, that cuts down the chance of, OK, they've been, they've gone, the dust has settled, we can go back to the way we were. That's one of the ways in which we have to do it. Because at the end of the day we still speak in the organisation's language, we talking competition, and once you've put that in there,**

companies like to see their names up as the best practice for equal opportunities. And you know...

***INT: ..YOU WILL JOIN IN OUR COMPETITION! (LAUGHS)**

***P24: (laughs) that's what we use. It just never stops. There's no ending to it. You have to find ways of, it means you have to forever be creative in how you make sure this policy works, and works and works. You know, you just can't, you can't just drop it.**

***INT: BECAUSE I SPOKE TO SOMEONE WHO WAS AT ONE OF THE INNER LONDON BOROUGH COUNCILS AND HAD BEEN THERE FOR YEARS, AND HE SAID HE HAD SEEN AN AWFUL LOT OF PROGRESS BUT THAT IT WAS A COUNCIL THAT INSTITUTED POSITIVE ACTION TWENTY YEARS AGO AND THEY NOW HAD THIS REPRESENTATIVE WORK FORCE, BUT HE SAID IT WAS A HORRIBLE PLACE TO WORK BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T PEOPLE WHO NATURALLY GET ON WITH OTHER, OR THEY WEREN'T PEOPLE WHO RESPECTED EACH OTHER, OR (TAPE ENDS BUT INTERVIEWER DESCRIBES HOW LOOPHOLES IN THE POLICY ARE FOUND BECAUSE THE CULTURE HAS NOT CHANGED WITH THE ADVENT OF THE POLICY).**

***P24: That's why our policies, our equal opportunity policies, and certainly the CRE standards for umm equal opportunities, it dovetails things like, umm Investors in People, you know, national training awards. Because in each of those different awards, there's space in there for equal opportunities as well. And when we designed our programme we made sure it fitted in, so where the company is say going for something like Investors in People, where they're scrutinised anyway, we help them with the equal opportunities side by getting them to qualify on our standards first. Have you seen our standards?**

***INT: YES.**

***P24: Yeah, so we work with them on that first. And so we say well where are you on the scale, and that could then get fed into Investors In People and you know, it's again for the company to try and make sure things work in general but (..) we can't be there**

doing all of it but yeah I accept that the fact that sometimes people yeah just sort of like go around each other like eggshells because they don't like to challenge any more. But it comes down to how you manage your people, how you manage yourself, what are the incentives. You know.

***INT: BUT YOU DO THINK THAT THERE REALLY IS A SOLID BUSINESS CASE?**

***P24: For equal opportunities?**

***INT: FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.**

***P24: Definitely. Definitely. I mean, you've probably heard of organisations being turned away umm, at negotiating tables because their representatives didn't represent the country. Yeah, well they didn't LOOK like the kind of group that they're talking about. They said you can't bring an all white male umm team to such a negotiation table because we know that your clientele don't look like that. If you're going into Asia/Pacific to trade, then you need to have people who look like the people of Asia/Pacific!**

***INT: AND CULTURALLY AWARE OF THAT DIFFERENCE AS WELL. I THINK ESPECIALLY WITH THE ASIA / PACIFIC GROWING AS IT HAS DONE, HAD DONE! (LAUGHS)**

***P24: Had done!**

***INT: I THINK THERE WAS ACTUALLY A CONTRACT RECENTLY WASN'T THERE WHERE AN AVIATION CONTRACT I THINK IN THE STATES, WELL THEY WON THE CONTRACT BASICALLY BECAUSE THEY HAD A LOT OF CHINESE-AMERICANS WORKING FOR THEM, AND THEY FELT MORE COMFORTABLE DEALING WITH THAT.**

***P24: Because you know how to behave when you go into those areas as well. And we've had, for instance, the telephone companies are finding themselves in the same situation where their adverts are reflecting the community wherever they could and umm they're sending out small work parties to different areas where they're mixing the**

colour groups so that it will actually match that community. Umm and they've seen the difference. They're actually seeing the difference in there.

***INT: SO WILL IT MARKET PRESSURE THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THE END THEN DO YOU THINK?**

***P24:** It probably would be at the end of the day because it's bottom line, it's what people are working for. Uhh it probably would end up being that. But as long as it's solidly done, that when the company is ticking over nicely it doesn't then say we don't need these people any more. That's where we have to keep on top of it because it could happen in that way as well.

***INT: ALRIGHT THEN, I'LL LEAVE IT THERE...**

***P24:** You got me on the wrong subject, you know because I'll be on about this all day!
(laughs).

***INT: IS THERE ANYTHING THAT I HAVEN'T ASKED ABOUT THAT YOU'RE DYING TO TELL ME?**

***P24:** No, it all ties in well. Yeah, it follows everything that we're doing.

INTERVIEW CONCLUDES.

PARTICIPANT NO. 25 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

***INT: I'LL START BY ASKING YOU TO OUTLINE YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY.**

***P25: It goes back many years. I was at, it goes back to the time when I did my PhD and I was sponsored by the Runnymede Trust and I was looking at selection tests and race bias, ethnic bias in the Civil Service tests. And then umm, that was the interest that I had and then I umm went to work and I carried that into the professional work as a psychologist, looking at equal opportunities and then as a business, equal opportunities is a major area of our work, always has been. Michael Pearn is my partner, he was at the Runnymede Trust as well, and so we've always been concerned about the state of equal opportunities and umm we've been in business since '84 and in the late 80s uhh we'll get some of our clients talk to us about this thing called diversity and umm I didn't pay much attention to it but then people over here started calling themselves "diversity consultants", couldn't quite understand what the difference was. And then umm subsequently I was asked to do, I was invited to do an address at the Occupational Psychology conference on diversity, and that was the first time I started reading into the subject and actually finding there were, uhh (..) there didn't seem to be any difference. You know, the equal opportunity consultants who are now, the former equal opportunity consultants who are now diversity consultants are actually doing exactly the same thing where as I thought it represented a change. It must have represented a change and we were getting left behind. And then I found out that there wasn't a change but there was, having looked into it, thinking well, isn't it about time there was a change? Umm and then uhh, I was asked to review a chapter for one of those international reviews of psychology and then that became the basis of the book and we did our own research. That was just to try and find out, let's get some data in the UK about what's working and what isn't working. And then we've carried it on from there, carried on researching the area, carrying on writing in the area., umm working with organisations, auditing procedures, that sort of thing. So the involvement with equal opportunities goes back for about eighteen years now.**

***INT: SO YOUR SWITCH FROM EQUAL OPP.S TO DIVERSITY WAS AS A RESULT OF HAVING SEEN OTHER PEOPLE, PRESUMABLY AMERICAN ORGANISATIONS, WAS IT?**

***P25: Yeah, this, the switch I think was, was more umm (..) it was a kind of a public switch. It was a public expression of what we'd always done anyway uhh because I think that internally we'd always operated on this diversity model but we never called it that. So we'd never felt comfortable with positive action, we'd never felt comfortable with target setting uhh and we just thought well, now is the time for us actually to umm, rather than kind of (..) keep it quiet, umm, we thought it's about time we went public on this. We just thought, we didn't think that that kind of positive action training, the target setting, was actually appropriate. And then when the surveys were carried out, we found it wasn't working either!**

***INT: SO WITH POSITIVE ACTION AND TARGET SETTING, IS THAT VERY FIRMLY ASSOCIATED WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYERS?**

***P25: It is yeah. And at the time that Joanne and I wrote the book in the mid 90s, umm it was actually something that was occurring more and more often. There were organisations like Opportunity 2000 umm, there were documents being produced by the Department for Employment, the Ten-Point Action Plan For Equal Opportunities. There was the Employer's Forum For Disability which was formed about that time umm and all of these organisations were saying the same things. All of these organisations, all the advice that they were giving were saying exactly the same thing: you need to take positive, give positive action training action to whatever group they were looking at, women, umm. There was Race, uhh Race for Opportunity was about to start up then as well umm and so. All of these things, so if you're looking at women, you need to have positive action training so far as women. If you're looking at ethnic minorities, you need positive action training for ethnic minorities and targets. If you're looking at disabled people you need targets and then the DFE, the Department for Employment advice, the ten point action plan, said targets and positive action. Well it was actually becoming part of the orthodox way of doing things. Well on a way of doing things, part of the orthodox advice that people were being given, whether they were actually doing it or not was actually a different issue, and I thought, I said, we, we,**

there was people going down a particular route, well isn't it about time somebody just sort of said, is this appropriate and shouldn't we have a debate it? And that's essentially what we tried to do.

***INT: SO WHERE DID YOU SEE THE TEN POINT ACTION PLAN FALLING DOWN THEN, IF YOU DIDN'T WANT TO GO DOWN THAT PATH?**

***P25:** Well the the Department for Employment, I thought was a checklist, yeah, yeah well the only two bits that I can remember were the ones about the target setting and the positive action. So you need to look at, take a specific group and do something to that group. Umm whereas, our, our view is, if if you find, things will often emerge because something has happened to a group, so women are, in one organisation we're talking to at the moment, women are not making it through to senior management, that's common (inaud). Women are not making it through to senior management and their statistics have proved it. Now, the approach that that type of advice is suggesting an organisation take is that you do something to the women. Now what we would be, what we, what we're saying is that, what we need to do is identify what is it that's stopping the women from, what is it in the organisation that's stopping women from making progress to senior levels? Identify those obstacles and tackle those obstacles. And when you start talking like that, you then start talking about organisational culture and organisational climate, rather than the group of women. And it's that organisational change which needs to take place.

***INT: SO THAT WAS YOUR PRIMARY OBJECTION, THAT IT WAS LOOKING AT SPECIFIC GROUPS, RATHER THAN IDENTIFYING THE CAUSES OF IT?**

***P25:** Yeah. And it's contradictory.

***INT: WHY?**

***P25:** Because then you say well, equal opportunities is about everybody and we're going to do this just for women.

***INT: BUT YOU'RE NOT PROVIDING EQUALITY?**

***P25:** Yeah.

***INT: OK. SO THE DISADVANTAGES OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE, AS YOU SAY, THAT IT ISN'T PROVIDING EQUALITY BECAUSE IT'S LOOKING JUST AT A GROUP...**

***P25: ...Well that's, what what what you said was the way that's perceived by employers.**

***INT: RIGHT.**

***P25: Umm and uhh, the umm, you will actually, you may well find that some people who are doing, working in equal opportunities actually, probably wouldn't, may not go down that positive action, target setting individually. Overall, as a population of people and as a uhh, well a movement is too strong a word, but there's a population of people working in a similar area, who actually find that would represent the orthodox thinking.**

***INT: SO THEN WHAT DO YOU, HOW DO YOU COUNTER THE CHALLENGE TO DIVERSITY THAT YOU ARE THEN IGNORING THAT THERE ARE INSTITUTIONALISED BARRIERS AND DISCRIMINATION IN PLACE? (..) UMM IN THAT DIVERSITY IS INCLUDING ALL GROUPS OF PEOPLE, YOU'RE THEN IGNORING, PUTTING A SMOKESCREEN OVER GROUPS OF WOMEN, GROUPS OF PEOPLE, WHO ARE GENUINELY DISADVANTAGED?**

***P25: Yeah, well see that, the things, the issues will emerge. Because you, I mean, because we still recommend keeping the statistics and doing the monitoring and that will highlight whether there are any potential problems there or not. So it may well emerge, the issue may emerge, well it's like it has in this particular organisation, and we think you should be keeping the statistics and you should be getting the feedback from the staff and you should be asking them about the state of the equal opportunities in the organisation. So you need to find out all of those things. You've actually got some some umm, the antennae are out, you know, we've got a sense of what's going on. We've got the statistics and also we've got people's perceptions about what's going on.**

***INT: SO YOU HAVE THE SAME MONITORING PROCESS BUT YOU'RE JUST APPROACHING IT FROM A NEW ANGLE?**

***P25: Yeah. Exactly. It's a, uh uh uh and the thing about it doesn't tackle the institutional issues (..) well if somebody did say that, it would be a stupid comment to make because it is tackling the institutional issues.**

***INT: HMM. BUT COULD YOU HAVE MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY AS A POLICY WITHOUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FIRST?**

***P25: I, uh, I, it's what people see of it, as some sequential thing, I never quite understand it!**

***INT: WELL THE PEOPLE I'VE SPOKEN TO SO FAR HAVE FOUND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY, LIKE YOU SAY, THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS ALREADY OPERATING ON THAT LEVEL, SO THEN TO CALL IT SOMETHING DISTINCT AND TO MAKE THAT DIFFERENCE, THE ONLY DIFFERENCE THAT HAS BEEN MADE SO FAR IS THAT YOU'RE LOOKING NOT AT UMM GROUPS BUT AT INDIVIDUALS AND WHAT EACH INDIVIDUAL HAS TO OFFER AND THAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD BE VALUED. WHICH SOUNDS WONDERFUL ON A ON A (..) PHILOSOPHICAL LEVEL BUT THEY COULDN'T SEE HOW THAT COULD PRACTICALLY EXIST, UNLESS YOU'D ALREADY STARTED TO EXAMINE THE GROUPS THAT WERE DISADVANTAGED AND THEN COULD MOVE ON TO SOMETHING THAT WAS ALL INCLUSIVE.**

***P25: Yeah because but what we're saying is if you look at, if there are groups that are being disadvantaged and you've got your attitude surveys, your focus groups, you've got the, the statistics which actually say that there is an issue here. Umm when people say you have to do equal opportunities first, I think what most people actually seem to be saying, don't you need to do something to that group of people? We would say no. There's a, they would say, don't you need to something to that group of people first and then move on to something that is, well I would say, I mean, I would say no. I don't see it as a sequential thing at all. So if you find that the selection process is an obstacle for ethnic minorities joining your organisation, right, why don't you tackle the selection process and the recruiters, rather than setting positive action uhh training course. In the book, there's an example from the TSB where they get very few ethnic minorities**

joining. Uhh, umm, they get very few ethnic minorities so they set up this uhh, ethnic minorities banking course, right? So this is for ethnic minority kids umm to teach them the banking skills and then they went through the normal selection process and then they were recruited by the panel and they found that the people they were taking on through this route actually stayed with the organisation far less, far far uhh for far less time than the people who were selected normally. And the issue of this is, there there's a quote in the book where the equal opportunity officer, the real problem lay with the selection process and the recruiters, not with the ethnic, not with the kids, because actually what you're saying is, if if, if these, if these ethnic minority kids need this extra training, then they are, it's this deficiency model I don't like. They are somehow deficient. If women aren't making senior management, we'll do something to the women because it's kind of, it's their issue. They they, the women have a problem, we must help them address the problem, whereas our our view is the women don't have a problem, umm, the ethnic minorities don't have a problem.

***INT: IT'S THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE?**

***P25:** It's the organisation and the people who are managing umm (..) who who are managers in that organisation, they may have a problem. Now we did a, we did a, we did some umm, we had to do, a government department asked us (..) umm (..) but the other, the other, the other part, part about this, is if you asked the groups themselves, what would you like to see happen, what action would you like, you know, uhh, do you think discrimination is taking place, and they may or may not say yes, invariably what happens in these surveys is people say no, it's not happening to me, but it is happening to my friend, umm and umm, you say, what would you like to have happen. And we asked this in a questionnaire, there was a survey in equal opportunities in an organisation of six thousand people were surveyed, it was huge and uhh one of the questions was umm about positive action, would you like to see positive action, just for women, just for ethnic minorities, and the majority of people, white/black, male/female said no. They said no. And the response of the equal opportunity officer was, I remember this, she said, how can we convince them that it's necessary? I thought, hang on a minute, if you knew what the answer was, if you knew you were going to go ahead and do this, why consult? You know? So, it was one of the classic things about attitude

surveys of that kind, if you know what the answer is you want, then there's no point asking the question. And so, the issue here was not so much about, and I think this is the case with a lot of people in the equal opportunity field, is they will say that, we need to do this, but actually I think they're talking more about themselves rather than the organisation. So we did this, that attitude survey, we did this focus group in an organisation, in a government department, can you find out whether the ethnic minorities are actually discriminated against and what specific training, specific to ethnic minorities do they actually want? And it was, it was a big discussion and, I can't remember, there was a large group of people in this room and it took all afternoon, we had about three or four hours and I swear this is true, is that seventy-five, and they didn't want positive action training, and it was coming out loud and clear is the people were saying, we are not the problem. Which I thought was great. And then the other thing was, they spent about seventy-five percent of the time, so about three hours out of the four hours, talking about the appraisal process, we don't think the appraisal process is fair, I don't know how I'm graded, I don't know why, uhh, I I see someone else graded as a B and I get graded as a C, how does that happen, how do we know this one? And so, depending on what appraisal covers, you think well, that, you know, it covers so much about people's performance at work and their concern was that their performance at work isn't being evaluated properly. But they didn't want specific training. They wanted to make sure that the processes the organisation were operating were fair. But the response the organisation needs to take as a consequence of that is actually to say, well actually, let's look at our appraisal process, rather than saying, OK let's put this ethnic minorities on a confidence building course – they seem bloody damn confident to me!

***INT: (LAUGHS) THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I FOUND WITH MY FIRST STUDY ACTUALLY, THAT PEOPLE JUST DON'T WANT TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH ANYTHING THAT MEANS THEY'RE NOT THERE ON MERIT BASICALLY. WHICH FINE, FAIR ENOUGH, I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT, I WOULDN'T WANT TO BE IN THAT POSITION EITHER, SO IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE BUT I THINK WHAT I WAS TRYING TO GET TO THE CRUX OF EARLIER WAS THAT YOU'RE SAYING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY ARE ONE AND THE SAME THING.**

***P25: AND DIVERSITY ARE ONE AND THE SAME THING.**

***P25: Same, yeah.**

***INT: BUT YOUR, DIVERSITY IS TACKLING EVERYBODY BUT TO GET OVER THE INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS, YOU'RE STILL MONITORING ON THE BASIS OF WHAT, RACE AND SEX AND DISABILITY?**

***P25: Yeah, yeah.**

***INT: SO THAT'S THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMPONENT OF DIVERSITY, IS THAT HOW YOU VIEW IT?**

***P25: Yeah. Those are the groups that have traditionally been discriminated against. So, you still need to be able to identify, so we're not saying that discrimination doesn't take place, we're not saying that discrimination shouldn't be tackled and we're certainly not saying it's a do nothing approach, although it gets caricatured as that. The uhh, but those are the groups that traditionally have been discriminated against so it seems valid for an organisation almost to give itself a health check, to see how we fare with these particular groups. And if it should happen in the future, which is highly unlikely, that these groups stop being discriminated against, then we'll say, let's drop this as a way of monitoring, let's look at something else. But yeah, it's part of that health check, you know, that an organisation needs.**

***INT: BUT YOU'RE NOT USING ANY OTHER ISSUES TO MONITOR, YOU'RE NOT LOOKING AT ACCENT, OR AGE, OR SOMETHING THAT DIVERSITY WOULD INCLUDE THAT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY WOULD EXCLUDE?**

***P25: Umm (..) it depends how you, some of these things, not, not on a formal basis but it does depend on how you do your analysis. We've just done, we've just done something in a, I think age is a tricky one anyway, but but we we've just done a review of an appraisal in an organisation and uhh to see whether it was discriminating on the grounds of uhh race and disability. When you put all the factors in, what seems to have emerged is that the discriminatory effects of disability and race are minimised and moderated by age. So age and length of service seem to have a greater impact in**

accounting for the variance in scores than race or disability. Now that has then thrown up, and this is what we'll often find in these kinds of things, it's often a very complex picture that emerges, especially when you look at the stats in a great amount of detail. And that's the other thing of course, a lot of equal opportunity people don't look at the stats in any detail like that. They just kind of look at the stats, ah hah, there's a difference there between white and black, it's a race issues, whereas in this particular instance it's it's, there may be a race issue but there may also be an age issue. Umm, so yeah, you know, you, it wouldn't necessarily throw up things like that. But attitude surveys may throw up things, focus groups may because part of what we're saying is that monitoring, it shouldn't just be on the statistics, you should actually be monitoring people's views and attitudes and perceptions. But you should also be monitoring your processes to see the extent to which they're matching up against best practice. So some of it is actually kind of factual, you know, there's the standard, this is what we're doing, these are the standards, how do we match up?

***INT: SO IS DIVERSITY A LOT EASIER TO SELL TO ORGANISATIONS THAN EQUAL OPPS?**

***P25: Uh (..) sold in that way it is yeah.**

***INT: AND DOES IT EFFECTIVELY MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO YOUR PRACTICE, TO THE WAY YOU'VE APPROACHED IT AS AN ORGANISATION?**

***P25: Well uh, our thinking developed because we, we, we identified uh a much broader kind of strategic approach to the issues rather than saying this is uh, and I've had of one or two people kind of er, well talks we've had with the Commission for Racial Equality saying well, it was always a strategic approach that we had. We always had a vision about where equal opportunities was going and my, my, it was a Commissioner at the CRE and I was saying to them (..) where? I mean when you used to work as an equal opportunity officer in an organisation, your policies were positive action and target setting, where was this kind of bigger vision about the organisation? Well it was there. So well, what, you know, so she was kind of saying that there wasn't anything new. Ah, fair enough but on the other hand, it was never published, it was never public, so how the hell was I supposed to know about it? In fact I don't think I**

believed her. But the the the uh, umm, uh, so this bigger view about the organisation umm, which is the MOSAIC model, as I said, there are six, it breaks down as six components and there are a thousand and one things that you've got to do to make yourself a diversity oriented organisation. So it's, it's easier to sell to organisations because you're actually looking at the organisation and people do feel uncomfortable about that kind of group oriented approach. But in truth, the amount of action an organisation has got to take, this is actually more challenging. So when, you get the response from organisations when they look at exactly what they've got to do, this is harder work than the equal opportunities. Rather than just having a ramp and having a crèche and saying well that's the equal opportunities sorted out, there's a thousand and one things we've got to do. So, having a harassment policy is great, it's important, it's necessary (..) but it fits, it fits, you know in our model it would be one component of the culture, the 'C' piece of the MOSAIC, one component of the culture, only one component of the culture and the culture is only one component of the MOSAIC. So if you, if you looked at your recruitment and selection processes, that's one part of the objective, fair processes, which is one part of that, which is one part of the MOSAIC again. But the the the, what we think it does is map out exactly what we should be doing, what we should be aspiring to achieve. If you know all the things you should be doing then you can actually start categorising them and prioritising them and then you start having the basis of a strategy.

***INT: SO YOU'RE SELLING AN ENORMOUS PACKAGE THEN, SELLING IT THAT WAY FOR AN ORGANISATION, YOU'RE SAYING YOU'VE GOT AN AWFUL LOT OF CHANGES TO MAKE RATHER THAN JUST INSTITUTING A FEW POLICIES. IS THAT PROBLEMATIC TO DO THAT?**

***P25: It's um, it hasn't, it hasn't proven to be so far. Umm, the umm, but I think it it it er, umm I mean the thing (..) whether it's problematic or not, I'm not too fussed about that necessarily I think the important thing is for people to recognise that it is a big, if they're going to tackle this problem, it is a big issue and it's one that's, they're going to have make progress on over many many over many years. Rather than thinking they've got to do a couple of things this year and then, you know, well diversity is a priority this year and you know we'll do things that need to be done and diversify and that will be it.**

The work we did with Hewlitt Packard, I mean they've gone public on this, I mean they, they, we did an audit with Hewlitt Packard, we compared them against our MOSAIC model and then as a consequence of that, they, we identified the things they need to do better on and on the basis of that, they prioritised (..) and that became the basis of their three-year strategy. That was it, year one we're going to do these two things, year two we're going to do two things and year three we'll do these two things. Umm (..) so as long as the organisation is prepared to take a long term view like that, it works.

***INT: SO WHAT ARE THE MAJOR OBJECTIONS THAT YOU ENCOUNTER WHEN YOU FIRST APPROACH AN ORGANISATION?**

***P25: Well is it, is it, the umm (..) umm the major objection is it, is it worth doing it at all? You know, what's the point? Umm this organisation I was telling you about umm umm have identified that there are very few women in senior management. It's a very successful organisation and uh they're saying, we actually make heaps of money as we are at the moment, so women aren't getting promoted, we make, we make hundreds of millions of pounds each year, so you know, really, who gives a toss? And in those circumstances, it's umm (..) but it becomes a, it's not a question, it's not just an issue about the uh, at the end of the day it isn't just an issue about umm the umm money that it may make you or the money that it may save you, it's actually an issue about the type of organisation that you want to have. And our argument has always been that this diversity oriented approach umm is actually driven by a set of values and you have to determine what type of organisation you want to be and you have to determine what sort of values that you want. And if you want to be a cost-cutting, low-cost operated, doesn't really give much concern for people-type issues, then that's fine, we're not for you and this approach isn't for you. But if you actually have values, and this organisation does have values, and you know, something like respect for people and all this sort of stuff, and their surveys are showing that, their surveys are showing that the women are becoming aware of the fact, they were probably always aware of it but they're now voicing it because there's a mechanism for having their voices heard, which is through this attitude survey, they're now picking up that there is dissatisfaction amongst women about the way women are treated in the organisation. Now, that may**

or may not bother them but it should bother them because it's actually respect for individuals, that's a part of their values.

***INT:** I FOUND MYSELF WITH A LITTLE CONUNDRUM WHEN I WAS LOOKING THROUGH THE RESEARCH THAT IF YOU ASK AN ORGANISATION WHERE THEY HAVE VERY LITTLE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, DIVERSITY, WHATEVER IN PLACE AND THE COMPANY IS WORKING FINE AS IT IS AND YOU ASK PEOPLE, ARE YOU SATISFIED? AND THEY SAY YES. BUT THEN IF YOU START TO RAISE THE AWARENESS AND SAY WELL YES WE HAVE GOT A COMPLAINTS PROCESS IN PLACE, THEN YOU ASK PEOPLE HOW SATISFIED THEY ARE, THEY'RE LESS SATISFIED, EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE DONE MORE ABOUT IT, YOU'VE RAISED THEIR AWARENESS TO THE POINT THAT THEY WANT MORE THAN THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY. SO HOW DO YOU, DO YOU COME ACROSS THAT?

***P25:** So they're actually less satisfied when the organisation has done something that they were before they had done something?

***INT:** YEAH. THAT'S ONE THING THAT I'M LOOKING INTO. I HAVEN'T GOT A THEORY FOR SO FAR.

***P25:** I haven't come across that.

***INT:** FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE UNIVERSITY SCENE, IF YOU ASKED SOMEBODY AT OUR UNIVERSITY, IT'S NOT A PROBLEM, MOSTLY BECAUSE IT'S MEN ALL AROUND, AND YET IF YOU GO TO THE OPEN UNIVERSITY, THEY HAVE SUCH STRINGENT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT PEOPLE ARE VERY AWARE OF WHAT THEY SHOULD HAVE AND WHAT THEY HAVEN'T GOT. SO EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE AIMING FOR SOMETHING, BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEY HAVEN'T ACHIEVED THAT AIM, THEY'RE LESS SATISFIED WITH THEIR EQUALITY ENVIRONMENT IF YOU LIKE.

***P25:** Right. Yeah. Well I mean, that could be, I mean I personally haven't come across that myself. It it does come down to the way it's managed anyway. And about

communication but you can, I mean an organisation still has to be managed. And uh I think, I've seen in some local authorities where where the equal opportunities uh policies and the equal opportunities units, I mean they they, they've got to the stage in some local authorities where they're almost like running the organisation. They're like a police force!

***INT: WELL YES, I'VE COME ACROSS THAT AS WELL!**

***P25: Have you?**

***INT: ONE OF THE INNER LONDON BOROUGH COUNCILS, I SPOKE TO AN EQUALITY OFFICER THERE, WHO SAID THAT IT'S JUST DESTROYED THE NATURAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE BECAUSE IT IS SO STRINGENT THAT IF YOU SAY SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE NOT SURE ABOUT THEN SOMEONE CAN TAKE THE MICKEY AND YOU'LL BE PUT ON THE DISCIPLINARY ROUTE, WHETHER YOU'RE GUILTY OR NOT, SO NOBODY TALKS TO EACH OTHER. NOBODY HAS ANY FUN ANY MORE OR ENJOYS WORKING WITH EACH. THEY'RE JUST TAKING ADVANTAGE AND FINDING THE LOOPHOLES IN THE POLICY.**

***P25: Yeah, that's interesting. That's interesting. The the, it can, it's this thing about umm, it's not an objective in itself, that's the thing. You know, the Open University or the local authority, we'll say the local authority, it doesn't exist to provide equality of opportunity. That's not what the local authority is there for. The local authority exists to provide services for local people, very important services for local people. That's what it's there for and the diversity or equality policies have to enable that organisation to achieve that objective as well as it was doing before, if not better than it was doing. And if it's not, then something's wrong with that policy. But as soon as people start seeing it as an end in itself, then it becomes a serious problem.**

***INT: YES. THAT WASN'T MANAGED PROPERLY BY THE SOUND OF THINGS AND THEIR POLICY WAS A RESULT OF POSITIVE ACTION FOR TWENTY YEARS AS WELL. SO THEY HAD A WORK FORCE THAT REPRESENTED THE LOCAL POPULATION BUT IT WASN'T A NATURAL**

BALANCE AT ALL. OK, CAN I JUST TAKE YOU BACK A STEP TO THE IDEA OF EMPLOYERS OF CHOICE IS WHAT I GOT FROM WHAT YOU WERE SAYING BEFORE, WHAT TYPE OF GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND VALUES THAT AN ORGANISATION WOULD WANT TO HAVE. HOW MUCH MARKET PRESSURE IS THERE NOW TO BE AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE?

*P25: Um, there's some and um, I, I think (..) market pressure, I think there is some. I mean I think the legislation is obviously putting pressure organisations. I think that organisations are slow to pick up on the changes that are happening in society. Now we've done work with uh, we've done surveys, we regularly do surveys of undergraduates and we've found that uh women and ethnic minorities, the characteristics they're looking for, the number one characteristic they're looking for in an organisation is an equal opportunity employer. It doesn't feature in the top ten characteristics for white males because the whole issue about discrimination is different for them. Now if an organisation um, and the other thing that we found was the the whole thing about consistency, the the the white men actually were more likely to go on the recruitment image of an organisation, so the brochures, stuff they'd found out from other people, whereas the ethnic minority, the ethnic minority sample in particular was actually far more sensitive to stories about that organisation in the newspaper about discrimination. So there was uh (..) and if something that had come up in the press, like last year, the [organisation name] thing about the poster and, yeah, but overnight they they, once the ethnic minority people who were interviewing, overnight they went from an organisation that an ethnic minority wouldn't think about working for, to an organisation they wouldn't work for, actually to an organisation they wouldn't buy a car from, let alone work for. Now it's if, organisations I don't think are sensitive to those type of things at all. They kind of scratch their heads and think, I wonder why we don't get any women or minorities apply to us? Maybe we could, perhaps if we sort of had something different in our brochure, or something like this. That's what they don't realise is, people are picking up stronger messages about the organisation from the press.

*INT: SO YOU DO BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF REPUTATION THEN?

***P25:** Absolutely. Well it's coming up in our survey loud and clear. So if the organisation, they said there was, there was somebody this week, GPT, they said they were going to pay off student loans if they're going to work for them. It was in the paper yesterday, failing to attract graduates. So they uh pay off your loan. Which is fine and that will attract a certain kind of person to them. But then they they need to be looking at what type of image they're projecting generally, why never, why has nobody heard of GPT?

***INT:** AND WHO ARE THEY GOING TO ATTRACT BY OFFERING THAT TOO?

***P25:** Well, exactly! And uh, the uh, and if an organisation, because we get people saying to us a lot, saying things like, we'd like to have more ethnic minorities working for us but they don't apply. But then they don't take the next step which is to actually try and find out! They just kind of assume that, well, there must be something's going on and we can't be, we can't be fussed to umm find out why, so there's a commitment issue. But I think there, those kind of things will become increasingly important. I mean take graduates for example, I mean uh fifty percent of undergraduates are female, or just about, I don't know, I think it may be just over fifty percent of undergraduates are female and something like uh, even though ethnic minorities are five and a half percent of the population, they form something like ten to twelve percent of the undergraduate population. You think well, if an organisation is going to ignore these things, and they lag, organisations do lag, they lag behind um but uh some of these social pressures will be building up without them even being aware of it. And I think we've, I think we've identified one thing now with this kind of research.

***INT:** SO WHAT IS THE MAJOR MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYERS TO INVEST IN DIVERSITY OR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY?

***P25:** Well I think the the the uh the organisations that we're working for increasingly are are international organisations, multinationals. And they kind of come to this diversity issue, they kind of make, they've come to this kind of diversity issue by looking at the world and then applying it locally. So kind of saying well we need to make sure that we're making the best of our workforce in the sixty-eight countries that we work in, so we want to make sure that we're treating people fairly and that sort of

thing, oh hang on a minute, doesn't that mean that we ought to be doing it in the UK? You know? So part of it is like that. Um and um, so I think the global dimension for the people in organisations that we're working for is actually quite interesting. Public sector, um, that the public sector has got a lot in the equal opportunity field and they're finding it's not bringing the results that they wanted and I think some of them are actually prepared to say now well look, we've been banging our heads now against this wall for such a long time, isn't it about time we tried something different?

***INT: AND THOSE ARE THE MAJOR MOTIVATIONS ARE THEY?**

***P25: Yeah.**

***INT: DO YOU GET....**

***P25: ...and the legislation. From from the survey we carried out last year, the legislation is a major motivator. Uh the legislation is a major motivation. There's the business sense, it just made good business sense. If you're looking at your practices, the way you're doing things, it makes good business sense. And the other big motivation for organisations taking action is that a senior manager (..) takes it on, or the chief executive of the local authority or of the organisation, says this is an issue. So those have emerged from our surveys as the top three factors.**

***INT: RIGHT BECAUSE I'VE SPOKEN TO SOME PEOPLE WHO DO IT PURELY TO AVOID LITIGATION COSTS OR THE COSTS OF DISCRIMINATION ANT THAT'S IT, THAT'S THEIR ONLY INTEREST IN IT AT ALL. AND I SPOKE TO ONE HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR WHO (..) WHO WAS QUITE HAPPY THAT THERE WAS DISCRIMINATION AROUND BECAUSE IT GAVE HIM A BUSINESS ADVANTAGE THEN IN THAT HE COULD RECRUIT FROM THE POOL OF PEOPLE THAT OTHER PEOPLE WEREN'T RECRUITING FROM. HE WAS DEALING ON AN INTERNATIONAL BASIS, SO HE WAS LOOKING FOR MINORITY GROUPS AND PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT LANGUAGES IN PARTICULAR AND HE SAID I'M HAVING A FIELD DAY! YOU KNOW, I'M GETTING GREAT PEOPLE THROUGH AND THEY STAY AND IF DISCRIMINATION STOPS I'M GOING TO BE IN BIG TROUBLE BASICALLY!**

BUT NOT A FORMAL POLICY IN SITE, A COUPLE OF MISSION STATEMENTS AND THAT WAS IT.

*P25: (laughs) yeah. The policies, I mean that was the interesting thing, we we we we we made the point in the book is that you know something like seventy percent of organisations said that they'd got a policy but quite a few other organisations hadn't, and we thought well (..) umm it probably helps if you're an equal opportunities employer to make a formal statement of it, but could you actually be doing the right things without having the policy, of course the answer is yes. Well you could be.

*INT: BUT YOU WOULDN'T KNOW WHETHER YOU WERE OR NOT WITHOUT ANY MONITORING.

*P25: Yeah but they could be doing the monitoring, let's say not having a policy but they could be doing a lot of the things, they could be doing a lot of things properly. It helps to make the thing, just in terms of communication to your staff I think it helps. Uh yeah.

*INT: OK THERE'S ONE OTHER THING I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT AND THAT'S HOW YOU PERCEIVE DISCRIMINATION HAPPENING NOW. HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY CHANGES IN THE PATTERNS INVOLVED OVER TIME?

*P25: It's umm, things have moved on, in terms of organisations that umm it's it's not as overt as it was um and uh it's far less acceptable now for an organisation to say that they're not going to take any action. Umm, the public sector are obliged to be far more active than they were eighteen years ago. So eighteen years ago you could attend a conference where a government minister might turn up and say, you know, we treat everybody properly and we treat everybody fairly and there's nothing that we need to do to change because the civil service is a very fair institution. I attended a few where somebody would say that. Well now, and then the public sector was actually very slow because I think some private sector organisations who kind of uh umm took the lead. Civil service were actually in the early days just pathetic. Because when I actually did my research with them I mean they were just, they were awful. And complacent and arrogant uh, patronising, all those sorts of things, I'm talking about personal interactions

now as I remember it but they they were awful. And then when the private sector started to take it aside, then the public sector had to become, they picked up some gusto then and then and then pursued it quite actively. So you couldn't get to a situation now of always, somebody saying it's not an issue. And uh some of the kind of gross statements that people used to make about that, what the role of women is in society, people wouldn't (..) people would think twice, you'd like to think that people, some people still say them.

***INT: WELL THAT'S WHY I ASKED. IS IT THAT THE ATTITUDES HAVE CHANGED OR THAT THEY'VE REALISED THAT IT'S NOT AS ACCEPTABLE AS IT ONCE WAS?**

***P25: They know it's not as acceptable as it was. But I think also as a consequence of that, as a consequence of the behaviour changing, I can see the attitudes are changing as well.**

***INT: DOES THAT STAND FOR RACE AND SEX?**

***P25: I think the attitude has changed more quickly on the sex front because there is a, it's actually been proven statistically that this thing about critical mass, that if if, in the psychology studies that have been carried out, looking at changes in views and stereotypes and that sort of thing, that when you put people in small numbers, then the likelihood, or small or no numbers, then the likelihood of that group of people being stereotyped is far greater. Then you get to about, I can't remember exactly but something like you get to a mass of people where they form about ten to fifteen percent of the workforce, then the the stereotypes actually start to go, because there's there's such a mixture of people that exist within the organisation that people can actually say well you know, you can't say that all women are, all women, women aren't interested in a career, they're only interested in children because you actually know enough examples of women around you to say well that can't be true of all women. And I think that that critical mass is happening on the sex front and it may never happen on the (..) ethnic minority front. And it may not be a question, it's just an, it's intriguing because the situation here as you know is different from the United States. I mean in the United States an organisation can develop a critical mass. I mean your personnel director may**

develop a critical mass of ethnic minorities because of his recruitment policies but many organisations are not going to be able to have that critical mass. And so (..) changes, the other thing is well, people will say well things have moved on the sex front, and it's not, and so now we need to do exactly the same thing for the ethnic minorities. The issues are different. Even when you look at statistics and the numbers.

***INT: DO YOU SEE A CHANGE IN ATTITUDES THROUGH GENERATIONS?**

***P25: Umm, generally speaking, yeah.**

***INT: BECAUSE I HAD SOMEONE ELSE TELL ME THAT, TAKING A BUNCH OF ENGINEERS, A BUNCH OF SAY TWENTY-FIVE YEAR OLD ENGINEERS, THE MEN WOULD EXPECT THE WOMEN TO BE ABLE TO DO THE SAME THINGS AS THEM, THAT THAT WOULD BE THE NATURAL BALANCE THAT HAS BEEN REACHED NOW BUT THAT HADN'T TRANSFERRED AS FAR AS ETHNIC MINORITIES WERE CONCERNED. THEY WERE AWARE THEY SHOULDN'T SAY ANYTHING DISCRIMINATORY BUT THEY HADN'T REALLY CHANGED THEIR ATTITUDES, JUST LEARNT TO BE MORE COVERT ABOUT IT.**

***P25: Well I think that's one of the things that people need to be aware of though, if they make progress on one front, it doesn't actually mean that they've made progress on all fronts. You know, so an organisation may say, well like you say now, we've got more women in this organisation now, we must be an equal opportunities employer. Actually there may be a lot of racist names that are being made and unacceptable behaviour um towards ethnic minorities which actually aren't being addressed or picked up at all.**

***INT: SO WHEN YOU GO INTO AN ORGANISATION ARE YOU AIMING TO CHANGE PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR OR ATTITUDES?**

***P25: Initially, we we we can't guarantee we can change anybody's attitudes so we never make that promise. What we can do is say we will raise their awareness, we will hopefully raise the level of knowledge that they have about these issues. And if an organisation is strong enough, it will actually put policies in place which will affect**

people's behaviour. I mean some of, some, I'm not talking about some of the things that we were referring to earlier necessarily but things like when we carry out a searching process it will be properly structured, if you're going to be involved in interviewing people, you must be trained. That type of behaviour change we know people can appreciate. But then with that behaviour change, with some people, a change in attitudes will take place as well.

***INT: SO HAVE YOU DONE ANY LONGITUDINAL...?**

***P25: ...No.**

***INT: DO YOU SEE ANY PROGRESS YOURSELF, ANECDOTALLY?**

***P25: Well I mean anecdotally I mean you can, things have changed. The type of things that people say these days will not, the type of things that people were saying eighteen years ago will not be said today. They just won't. The situation has changed. It's always changing. I find it a bit frustrating when people kind of say how well equal opportunities now is just as bad as it has ever been and things are never going to change, and I find that very frustrating. But I think, no things have changed. And this is probably where I was eighteen years ago and maybe I was saying the same things like that, saying things like oh it's a bad state of affairs and things will never change etc. etc. actually now having been involved in the field for quite a period of time I actually think things have changed. So somebody coming in and sort of saying well things are dreadful and as dreadful as they ever have been, you've got no sense of perspective, you've actually got no sense of history on this. Uh um, the woman who used to be the head of the um (..) who was involved heavily with the Runnymede Trust was Baroness Sear and she was wonderful. And she came and gave a talk here and she said well, you know, that used to frustrate her. And of course her time scale is going back to the thirties and she was going back to the thirties, looking at the state of uh uh sex equality then and then people say to HER there's been no change! They say things like that it's actually um, for her I kind of felt that people were almost kind of dismissing all of the work and effort that she'd put it, and she'd been working at a political level as well as an organisational level.**

***INT: SO EXTENDING THAT FURTHER, DO YOU THINK YOU'LL EVER TALK YOURSELF OUT OF A JOB?**

***P25: (laughs) not a chance! There's enough stupid people around isn't there? I mean, the the uh, there's enough stupid people around to carry on discriminating and uh there's uh, no we're never going to get to, I mean we thought we were going to talk ourselves out of a job when we when we, when we said that we will not do positive action training and we're against target setting. I mean we actually said that that could be the end of our equal opportunity work. So we we already thought that because actually the whole kind of, as we perceived it anyway, the whole tide of opinion was moving in the other direction, so we thought if we make a mistake now it's bad enough, we'll lose of all that work. So kind of, we did consciously, it was a conscious decision and we consciously sat down, we we we formally sat down and thought OK, when this book is published, we will lose our work in the equal opportunities and are we ready to do that? That's fair enough. But that didn't happen.**

INT: OK. THANK YOU VERY MUCH, I'LL LEAVE IT THERE.

PARTICIPANT NO. 26 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

***INT: OK, IF YOU COULD START BY BRIEFLY OUTLINING WHAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY IS.**

***P26: Right well, I've been working at PK for about twelve years and in that time I've, I work in two of the three areas that we work in, the equal opportunities umm fairness issues, managing diversity area and also assessment and development of people. So as part of my work at PK over the twelve years, umm I've done quite a lot of different sorts of work with clients umm on equality issues. I tend to get involved with things like, you know sort of basic things like training, which is like awareness training or skills training or strategy development training, we get a group of people together. I do a lot of work on equality audits in organisations umm and I've sort of pulled together some umm best practice standards for different processes in organisations and various sources which we use at PK in audits. And um I get involved in a lot of auditing work, either at the process level or more at a strategic level um which is looking at some of the wider issues, like what is the strategy guiding this, how is it being communicated, those sorts of things. So that's a wider sort of audit and then various bits and pieces of work, sort of one-off things where somebody perhaps asks you to um you know, just advise on something, or often sort of again in the sort of key processes like selection, recruitment, appraisal umm people's development, those sorts of things I get involved in.**

***INT: AND WHAT MADE YOU JOIN PK IN THE FIRST PLACE?**

***P26: Ohh, well I was, I joined PK when I was quite young, so I didn't actually, I'd never actually, I'd never heard of them and they actually had only been in business for eighteen months, so they didn't have any reputation or anything. So I was sort of like of, I sort of fell into it to be honest. Umm I was working as a researcher at the University of Manchester, umm, I was doing things that were related to occupational psychology but not stuff that I wanted to see myself doing for very much longer and umm so I was having a look on the job market and I was looking to get into consultancy but I didn't think I'd actually get in at that time because that was sort of more the early**

eighties, well mid-eighties, it was before the boom in occupational psychology, where a lot of people came straight out of MScs and then into consultancies and umm I got offered two jobs, one with um a consultancy which was much more ergonomically focussed and one with PK and I chose PK because of having a much softer focus, a more people focus than the sort of harder edge of occupational psychology, but I didn't know anything about the company. I mean they sent me a brochure but at that time it was Michael Pearn and Binna Kandola, that's all it was.

***INT: THAT MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE EXCITING, STARTING AT THE BEGINNING OF IT.**

***P26: It was! It was actually. I mean I didn't think about it then as ooh, this is exciting but looking back and looking how the organisation has changed, grown and developed, that's very interesting.**

***INT: SO HAVE YOU HAD CONTACT WITH CLIENTS ALONG THAT LENGTH OF TIME AS WELL?**

***P26: Yeah. Yeah, I mean because I came as the first employee, although my job title was, I think I was actually called Consultant/Researcher, my job title, umm, I mean the first six months, basically I sat in the office and looked in the library and sorted some things out but after that, because they were just so short of resources, I got thrown into a lot client work. So it was probably after the first six months I was doing client work. Um you know, it wasn't um, it certainly wasn't anything like as structured as the way development is now (laughs) because we've got more resources to plan development and to do it in a structured way whereas there, you're just sort of, you know, you weren't on your own but you were working with one of the partners, so you were doing a lot of client work.**

***INT: SO HAVE YOU BEEN IN A POSITION TO NOTICE HOW MUCH DISCRIMINATION IS GOING ON IN THE WORK PLACE OVER THAT (..) DURATION?**

***P26: Umm, I mean it's, again it's a personal thing, when you're working with clients and you find out the sorts of things they're doing, some of them are still making basic**

mistakes. You know, it's not like it's moved on. I mean for some of them it has and is, certainly when you, umm the sort of issues that people raise when you're auditing, when you're perhaps having one to one interviews with staff about the sort of things that go wrong, how they feel fairness is going on in the organisation, the sort of things they put forward, in some organisations, yeah you never hear of thing like blatant sex or race discrimination but it tends to be more subtle, it tends to be more on things like grade discrimination, so the things that the legislation covers, the sort of, people know about and they try not to do it, or try not to do it obviously anyway. Umm but in some organisations it's surprising when you actually still hear like this stuff that used to go on in the seventies (laughs) you know, I thought we'd gone past that, that people know they shouldn't do that and they know they'll be caught, so they don't do it obviously, they hide it! You know, but occasionally you do get sort of surprised umm, I'm trying to see if I can think of certain sectors but it's often people that haven't had anything in the past, so often you know, sort of anything, public sector organisations are usually quite a well way along the route and uh they might not be particularly ideal in the way that they're tackling things but there's awareness there. And it's when you, perhaps you go into some hard nosed organisations like uh, you know, investment banking or something like that!

***INT: THAT'S WHERE I CAME FROM! (LAUGHS)**

***P26: (laughs) I mean, does this still go, it does still go on!**

***INT: THAT'S HOW I ENDED UP DOING THIS! (..) ALRIGHT, SO YOU DO NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIFFERENT SECTORS OF INDUSTRY THEN. DO YOU NOTICE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIKE THE JOB HIERARCHY, SO THE MANAGERS SAY ONE THING AND THE WORKERS SAY ANOTHER?**

***P26: Oh absolutely. Absolutely. Every audit, um the way we do an audit is that, say if we were doing a systems audit where we're looking at recruitment and selection, we were looking at appraisals, we were looking at umm training and development, we were looking at harassment, we were looking at discipline, those sorts of systems type audit, umm we get information from lots of sources and at, from different levels. So you'd**

have umm say your senior managers sort of say look this is the policy on this, this is what we do, blah blah blah blah blah, haven't got a clue what happens down the organisation. You have your sort of, talk to your HR managers and they have their view on various things. You talk to the actual staff, umm quite a different view. And of course because you're asking for, well give me an example of that, you know, don't just whinge, give me an example, the sort of examples that they bring out and you think, well OK, did you raise this? 'No I didn't raise it, oh I can't do anything, I feel so powerless', umm, I used to say, oh because you've got an umm, say like an anti-harassment policy, umm which is, and they say, 'oh yeah, that's a laugh, you know, who are they going to support, you know if there's a power difference in the organisation, who are they going to support?' And it's often the perception of powerlessness is still there and that there's not sort of, that there's no real organisational commitment to sorting out problems if there is any. So there's totally different views at different levels in the organisation.

***INT: DO YOU STILL FIND QUITE A LOT OF FEAR AND MYSTERY AND TABOO SHROUDING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES?**

***P26:** Umm I think there are certain things, people are quite happy to talk about gender issues usually and disability issues. They are often very ignorant about disability but are quite happy to talk, they're still a bit funny on race. You know, there's all this, there's like ohhhh, it's sensitive. And they tend to, I think what's happening now is that, certainly at the staff level, it's quite interesting that at the staff level, people are seeing equality issues, fairness issues, much more widely, so that general managing diversity, general issues of fairness, so they'll sort of say, 'oh I don't think there's anything wrong', you know, 'I don't think you know we're falling into traps on sex, race, disability but the age discrimination that goes on in this organisation, you know, you know, you will not get promoted if you're over forty, it doesn't matter how good you are'. Or, 'you won't be eligible for this job' whatever. Of course there's no law to stop to stop that going on but umm you know the sort of blatant bad practice that does go on and the staff are quite, they're quite good at picking up on those because it's quite personal, 'ohh you know, well if you don't get on with your manager, then they make life difficult for' and that's sort of a part of managing diversity, that it's not falling into

any nice equal opportunities categories. So it's a fairness issues but it's not a uh a traditional equal opportunities issue. So they're quite good at picking up those uh where as higher up in the organisation they tend to be much more blinkered and I think it's often because that's what they want to be. 'If we're doing these sort of things on gender', and they've got like one or two things, 'oh we've got a crèche and we allow flexible working, so we must be good. You know, we've got some ticks in the boxes. If we're doing this on race, oh well we had this positive action programme once, we're doing this on disability, oh, well we got a lift put in, you know, so we're doing lots of things.' But they're sort of small initiatives but not impacting on the culture of the organisations, so they're really not making any difference what so ever.

***INT: YEAH, I CAME ACROSS QUITE A LOT OF THAT. IT'S LIKE, 'WELL OUR BUILDING ISN'T WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE' AND THAT WAS IT. THAT WAS THE ONLY THING THAT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MEANT TO THEM. YOU KNOW? HELLO! (..) SO, OF THAT LEVEL OF DISCRIMINATION THAT YOU SEE THERE, HOW MUCH OF IT DO YOU THINK IS INTENTIONAL AND HOW MUCH IS DUE TO A LACK OF AWARENESS?**

***P26: I think (..) most of it is lack of awareness umm I don't (..) I very rarely come across anything that I would say is deliberate (..) nasty, nasty discrimination. Race, you find it occasionally, you do find it occasionally in particular individuals who've got a certain thing about somebody. But usually because it it's tend to moved on a little bit more from the say traditional focus, it tends to be more subtle. And so it's just harder to uncover. And it's very easy to say, yes I did that unknowingly because I didn't see the implications and you find that on courses all the time. When you sort of, say perhaps you're doing a case study and you sort of, that people can quite easily grasp that you shouldn't say, 'oh this job's not available to anyone who's a woman' but they don't understand the processes and the things which go on which actually stop women from being successful in that role, or from applying to that role, or other things that actually stop them from having that, so the undermining behaviour, the patronising behaviour, they think well that's just part of the organisational culture, that happens to everyone. You know, this that and the other. So yeah, it does happen and that means that there's probably an awful lot of people who are probably demotivated and not working at their**

best umm so all this sort of, the business benefits of REAL equal opportunities, i.e. way beyond gender, race, disability but you know, to getting the best out of everyone, you're just not capitalising on that because you're not creating an environment in which people can work effectively. And it doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman, it doesn't matter whether you're this race or that race, it doesn't matter whether you've got a disability or haven't got a disability, it doesn't matter if you're an Aston Villa supporter! You know? You should be creating a culture and an organisational framework in which everybody should be happy to come to work, enjoy being at work. If there are issues to be dealt with, they're dealt with and they're dealt with in a sensitive and effective way. That doesn't mean that everybody is going to be happy and smiley all the time but (..) you know you're creating that sort of environment to work in and that's just not, you know people just don't think in that, they're sort of thinking small scale, they're not thinking strategically. They're not really thinking about big culture change even though they say those words, 'oh we're in the middle of this culture change programme' and they've got lovely little sort of umm logos and that sort of thing, 'and we have our values, respecting each other' and you know, blah blah, 'caring for staff', yeah, so what does that mean in practice?

***INT: AND HOW DO YOU DO IT?**

***P26: Do it, yeah, 'oohh!' So you know, people say the words but they not really.**

***INT: SO WHAT ACTUALLY CONSTITUTES THEN AN ENVIRONMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OR DIVERSITY? HOW DO PEOPLE KNOW THEY HAVE ONE?**

***P26: It's um., again that's a hard thing, there would be lots of signs I think. You would never be able to say if you have this one thing then (..) it is but umm (..)...**

***INT: ...DO YOU THINK PEOPLE DO RECOGNISE IT WHEN THEY HAVE IT, OR DOES RAISING THEIR AWARENESS RAISE THEIR EXPECTATION AS WELL?**

***P26: I think there's both. I mean I think there's the (..) with people's expectations, once they become more aware, they often get higher expectations. Also if an**

organisation has sort of flagged up that they think this is important, they are seriously going to do something about this, then people become more cynical if they see a piece of behaviour, or something that the organisation does which is against that. And that can undo a lot of the good work. And of course people have long memories, so that might have been like one thing that they cocked up but in fact, people remember that and talk about that for ten years, you know, so you have to do a lot of work. And I think that's what organisations don't really grasp is that they don't really grasp the importance of perception and that they don't do enough to give people a true perception. And giving people is not just telling them good news but telling them bad news but telling them what they're going to do about it. So, 'we made a mistake. Hands up but we didn't want to do that, we're trying to sort that out, and we're going to put this in place to see that doesn't happen, try to make sure that doesn't happen again, but we're not guaranteeing that it won't because people make mistakes.' And it's when people are being treated as adults, if that happens from a long period of time and if their say, their one to one relationships at work, say their immediate manager with their colleagues is more adult, and not defensive and all of those sorts of things, then people can slowly have that atmosphere of trust, where they can actually get to a position where if there's something going on, they're quite happy to raise it and they're not going to feel that they're not going to be you know, seen as a trouble maker, or their career's going to be blighted for it, or even less negatively than that, that, 'well what's the point because nothing's going to change anyway'. So there's probably going to be a lot of signs and a lot of them won't necessarily be things that are tangible like, 'oh we have the numbers right'. Which is what people used to really concentrate on in the sort of eighties and things. You know you can get the numbers right by doing the most worst things in the world but uh it's more about people's perceptions of how they're treated on a day to day basis, whether or not they feel that they're given an opportunity as much as anybody else. That they feel that consistent behaviour is going on. If a decision is made that they don't like, at least they can understand the reasons for the decision.

***INT: IT SOUNDS LIKE RAISING A CHILD REALLY! (LAUGHS)**

***P26:** Yeah, it's exactly the same! But going into organisations, you know you look at the way people manage and you think, you must be an awful parent if you behave like this. Because they do, it's sort of like, favouritism. And you think, god if you did that with your kids, you know, you'd be really pilloried. Umm blatant undermining of some people, just ignoring them, and not, but other people, you're in the in crowd, you know, we'll have this cosy discussion in my office and everyone else is thinking, ooh. You know, or you're suddenly get put on the good projects and you think, 'ooh, why didn't I get considered for that' and there's no explanation. There's no clear criteria for who got that project or why, so there's no sort of discussion about it so you can't, you know. So everybody just sort of feels hard done to and there may not have been any deliberate attempt, there may have been a particularly good reason why this person got that project...

***INT:** ...BUT THE LACK OF TRANSPARENCY...

***P26:**...transparency yeah and it's this not managing people's perceptions. And that's the thing with umm equality things. If you're going to get the business benefits back, you actually have to have a perception of fairness. Because most of the business benefits are to do with people's morale, the knock on effects of like stress at work, you know, so feeling happy and motivated, so really putting themselves out for the organisation. The downside of that is like more sickness, more time off, (groans) 'oh I'm not doing that' you know, people being difficult because they think the organisation's not being fair to them. All of those things that really make a difference uh depend on people's perceptions.

***INT:** THAT'S VERY INTERESTING THAT YOU SAY THAT ACTUALLY BECAUSE I'M LOOKING AT PERCEPTIONS BUT I'VE NEVER REALLY CONSIDERED IT IN TERMS OF, YOU KNOW, THE MANAGER CAN MANIPULATE HOW PEOPLE PERCEIVE A SITUATION. BUT I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHAT IT COMES DOWN TO REALLY.

***P26:** It does. It does.

***INT: EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION IS MANIPULATING PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS.**

***P26: Yeah and that sounds sort of nasty and manipulative, so what you, but what it is actually treating people as adults. Involving them, communicating to them, explaining, giving the rationale, so even if people don't like the decision, they can understand it and they can say, reluctantly that it was actually probably fair, that they didn't get that promotion, you didn't get it but here's the feedback. You know, this is the area that um you came out strongly on, you know, great, wonderful strength there but you need to do a bit of work on this area here, what can we do to make sure next time you go for it that we're building up, have you got a development plan, all that sort of stuff. OK, I'm not going, yippee I didn't get the promotion but I'm feeling quite positive that with some, that it was a fair decision...**

***INT: ...THAT YOU HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED.**

***P26: ...and I was considered properly and we've got a plan in place to move me forward, so next time I've got a better chance, but there's no guarantee. And it's that sort of, that openness that needs to be there because as soon as there's secrecy, as soon as people don't get an explanation, they make one up and what do they make up? They make up 'oh well you just didn't like me' and if you happen to be ethnic minority, you can say they didn't like me because I was black. If you happen to be a minority in that particular organisation or in that particular role for any other reason, it could be a man in a traditional female role, they'll say, 'oh was is because I was a man?' Now it may have nothing to do with it but that's what they think. Umm so it's just being mishandled and it's the perception which is so important.**

***INT: THAT'S INTERESTING. GOING BACK TO THE RAISING EXPECTATIONS BECAUSE YOU'VE RAISED THE AWARENESS, DO YOU THINK ANYONE EVER SITS THERE AND SAYS, 'RIGHT THAT'S IT, I KNOW FOR SURE, THAT THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED, I WAS ACTUALLY TREATED FAIRLY, I WAS CONSIDERED, I HAVE BEEN GIVEN ALL OF THIS' DO YOU THINK THEY EVER REACH THAT PLACE WHERE THEY ARE HAPPY WITH THEMSELVES?**

***P26:** I think umm, it's a sort of, they probably wouldn't sit there navel gazing because people tend to sort of, you'd be trundling along, OK and you know you're feeling reasonably content at work umm and then it's the things that go wrong that you get that you notice. So if things are trundling along, OK you don't actually feel that you've sort of had a bad deal on anything then you probably don't think, 'this is such a great organisation, oh they treat me so fairly' because you take that as normal. You just expect that. Just like if you umm if you get um I don't know, a plumber in, you expect them to do a good job. You know, you don't expect them to be, have problems, that's what I'm paying you for and so you expect your organisation to be run effectively, you expect your manager to be an effective manager, umm you expect the decisions to be made fairly. So you probably wouldn't think, 'oh yeah, that was a great fair decision' but if there was umm like an attitude survey goes round and say, 'do you think that your appraisal is fair?' people would probably say, yeah, generally. If you particularly asked them, then they may say, 'yeah probably it is, never had any problems with it'.

***INT:** SO IT WOULD BE ON A VERY SPECIFIC CHECK LIST RATHER THAN A GENERAL FEELING?

***P26:** Yeah. Well any, or any other way but it was probably sort of, um, it's just sort of like how you gauge motivation or morale in an organisation. A lot of that is touchy feely stuff. What does it feel like? Do people seem to be having a good time or do people look miserable? Um when their manager comes into the room, does the atmosphere change? Um, usually for the worst, you know (laughs). Does there seem to be a sort of atmosphere of fear, mistrust, secrecy, lots of whispering in corners? Or does there seem to be a sort of perfectly open environment? What happens at team meetings? Do people raise issues? Do people keep their gob shut, even though you know they whinge in corners all the time? So there's all of those sorts of things, are those sorts of things happening? And it helps you to gauge.

***INT:** AND YOU DO THAT AS PART OF THE AUDIT PROCESS DO YOU?

***P26:** Uh, we don't sort of measure morale particularly in that way but those are the sorts of things that if you were a manager, or if you were in the organisation and so you were in the organisation for a period of time, because we tend to sort of come in, do

some work, and then go out. So we're there for a specific project. But what we do is that in our audits we umm we actually assess each um process at the level of policy, at the level of practice and at the level of perception. So policy is what they've got down as their systems and procedures. Practice is what happens in reality, and you get that by finding, talking to lots of different people, and perception is what do people feel about it. And you ask them those questions either in a questionnaire or just through the interviews, group discussions and, but even in a group discussion that you run say with staff, there will be some things that they say 'yeah, this is great, that's not an issue but they say training and development, well, you know, but yeah, the appraisal process is fine, you know, we've got no problems with that.' Has anybody had any, 'yeah, my manager does it really well, every quarter we do this, blah blah blah blah blah' and other people sort of give their examples, so you know. So it's not, in these things, people often think they only news they're going to hear is bad news but in fact people do, when they actually are focused on it and think about it, do start to realise, actually that is quite a good process. Umm but what your doing is, I mean sometimes what we'll find on an audit is that people actually perceive it to be fine but it's awful in terms of best practice. And there you'd say the perception is actually high but the policy and the practice is poor. So if they were going to change the policy and the practice, they've got to make sure that the perception stays high as well.

***INT: THAT MUST BE QUITE DIFFICULT TO MANAGE THAT CHANGE TOO.**

***P26: Yeah and what you would do is you'd actually say, 'we've got this process, it's generally working well but we want to improve it and you know, some things have come to light, we've fallen into some traps, this is what we're doing to make sure we don't fall into those traps again, you know, I know it might mean a bit of extra work for you, or this that and the other, but it really is worth it to make sure we make the best decisions' or whatever you do, whatever it's about uh, but that's the bit that people forget to do, they just don't communicate properly. You know, they just turn round, 'oh our policies changed'. And everybody goes, 'oh, why what was wrong with the last one, oh, well it's going to change again in six months, I don't need to bother to learn that, do I, oh well, I'll just do it my old way' you know, it's all that sort of stuff and it's**

the, it's the things that go around that which really makes a difference as to what limit it's going to have.

***INT: SO HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE DO YOU THINK POLICY CAN ACTUALLY HAVE, IF IT'S MANAGED PROPERLY, HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE DO YOU THINK POLICY CAN MAKE TO (..) INDIVIDUALS BEHAVIOUR WITHIN AN ORGANISATION?**

***P26: I think it's necessary but not sufficient. I think it would be very difficult without a policy or without a clear statement of intent of some sort, even if it's just like organisational values or something like that to (..) get people, because people don't know what they're supposed to be aiming at, they, I mean, so they need some kind of organisational statement, which is usually called a policy. Um but that alone isn't going to make any difference whatsoever um and what that could do, if that was the only thing that you did then that could actually make things much worse in terms of perception, because you could say, 'well you say that but it's blatantly untrue, you just don't follow it', so everybody becomes really cynical um (..) but, if you do mean it and you do manage it properly and you do put the other things in place to support that policy and to make that, you know to make that reality, then it's a very very useful tool, so I'd say it's necessary but not sufficient.**

***INT: WHEN YOU'RE APPROACHED BY AS AN ORGANISATION BY A COMPANY, DO THEY TEND TO APPROACH YOU AT CRISIS POINT?**

***P26: Umm...**

***INT: OR DO YOU TEND TO GET EMPLOYERS THAT ARE FORWARD THINKING AND WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE SOMETHING BEFORE THEY HAVE TROUBLE?**

***P26: Umm, it's a whole range of things. There's often some sort of catalyst. It may not be a crisis particularly, it may be that umm I don't know, they may be part of a wider group of organisations and there's been a directive going around that you've got to look at something and they've said, 'oh, we can't really do that in house, we'll get someone in to look at it' but that may not have been prompted by any particular crisis, it**

was just part of a more general strategy but this operating organisation may not be totally committed to doing this and they don't know why they're doing it. Umm it may be an American organisation who have had a directive from the States that sort of thing.

***INT: SAYING YOU MUST INTRODUCE DIVERSITY! (LAUGHS)**

***P26:** Oh yes, because that's what we're doing over here, because there's a real issues so we've got to make sure that everybody else is and people say, 'ooh what does that mean to us, I don't know ooh but we've got to do it' um so they may have been told to do it. It may be something like they've had a nasty case which has cost them lots of money, or got them a lot of bad publicity, that tends to kick them into action. OCCASIONALLY, occasionally, it's people who are, who have got sort of like, are being quite strategic about HR and um the people resource, often linked with perhaps some sort of organisational change umm and they are being forward thinking but I'd say that's probably less common, less common. It tends to be more, there has to be a catalyst to do it and it could be anything, you know. It may just be, I mean it could actually be that um you've had a change of person come in and they just want to do something to show that they do something, and they picked on this because nothing's been done about it in this organisation in the past and they did in their last organisation and it was a great success so they're going to get lots of brownie points! You know, it could be a whole host of things. And whether or not they actually tell us what the reason is is another matter. You know, they could say, because they like to dress it up, you know, 'we're really thinking about moving this forward, and we need to do this and we need to do that, and that's what goes out to tender' in fact, the fact is that they don't tell that 'yeah, we've just had this really awful situation, which has prompted this because we're really embarrassed and don't want people to know'.

***INT: DO YOU THINK THEY BELIEVE IN THE BOTTOM LINE BENEFITS OF IT?**

***P26:** Um, I think some do. I think (..) I think a lot of, a lot don't think it through. We do an exercise on, say on an awareness course, it's a very simple exercise, the first thing we do with a group of people at any level, 'what are the purposes of managing equality or diversity effectively? What are the problems that would happen if you didn't do this

and how could you tell?' and every single group, in every single organisation will come out with a wonderful business case for it.

***INT: REALLY?**

***P26:** They always come out with a wonderful business case. They always come out with all the sort of different elements, very sophisticated business case covering things like, 'oh it would make it easier to recruit if we had', you know, PR value, um the sort of recruiting better people because they'd be attracted to us, we'd retain people longer, so we'd cut down the cost of training and development, recruitment, etc. people would be more motivated in their work, so they produce more, that would hit the bottom line. People would want to take on change initiatives more, so we wouldn't have to manage this. We wouldn't be dealing with problems and complaints all the time, so all the management time that is tied up with that would be actually moving the business forward, you know, there's a whole host of things that they come out with. Very sophisticated, you know, stress at work, blah blah blah blah blah blah, they come out with it every single time, but (..) I've never actually seen, when you see sort of organisation's that in their policies write down the business case, they're often very narrow. And it's like, they actually need somebody, or whoever's writing that, to actually get back to the grass roots and to, 'actually there are a whole load of more benefits of this'. I don't think they think about it. It's often just a, especially on managing diversity, they're saying, 'well we want to manage a diverse workforce and we want to have a diverse workforce because our customer base is diverse' (in a mechanical voice). So? What, what benefit would that be of to you? 'Well we, that would look better to the customer'. Yeah? What happens if you, yeah, so you have this diverse, what happens if they're all miserable and they go out to your customer, you know? 'Well, um, uh, we'd be able to understand the customer needs better'. Yeah, any, any other things, yeah, yeah.

***INT: HOW AND WHY, PLEASE TELL US, EXPLAIN! (LAUGHS)**

***P26:** Yeah and people just don't think it through. It's like they've um they've picked up the book which says you've got to have a mission statement, you've got to have values, you've got to have this, and oh by the way, managing diversity, that's a hip

thing to do, have that down. But they don't think through. Whereas if you actually get a group of people, anybody (..) if you actually ask them the questions, they know the answers but that slips away from them in the day to day. And it's always interesting on courses because we always do that session first because they make the case, it's a bit of a revelation to them and then once we're getting into more sort of practical issues where it's easy to say, 'oh but that costs too much money, oh that, da da da da' say, OK, you're saying can you afford to do it, can you afford not to do it? Look back at that.

***INT: IS THAT THE POINT THAT IT STARTS TO SLIP AWAY THEN, THE MOMENT YOU COME TO THE PRACTICAL THINGS?**

***P26: Yeah, that's right, because we've got, you know, sort of, people have got resource limitations, we've got to, 'that would mean that we actually had to do things better', we have to build in more accountability, which takes resource! If you're going to double check things, if you're going to have somebody looking at this, it takes resource. If you're going to train people properly and support people properly to do things properly, that takes resource. It takes time and it takes money.**

***INT: SO BEING A GOOD EMPLOYER REALLY IS SEEN AS A VERY DESIRABLE THING? BY EMPLOYEES OR BY EMPLOYERS?**

***P26: Both. Both. People want to be, no, there's nobody who sort of says, 'I don't, I want to be a bad employer!' but whether or not there's the commitment to uh, it's like um you know sort of mission statements and the values, yeah great! But what are you, where are you going to put your money where your mouth is? And that's the bit where it starts to slip away. And there will always be competing organisational pressures. Resource will always be limited. Time, money, will always be limited. Skill will always be limited, so you have to make the best decisions you can. And that means that, and because (..) managing diversity is about culture change, it's a long term thing. It's very easy to get put on the back burner because you're not going to get the immediate favour.**

***INT: AND NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET!**

***P26:** Uh that's right. So people are getting very short term and what they start doing is short term fixes, little bits of band aid over something um rather than actually curing the issue.

***INT:** DO YOU THINK THEN THAT EMPLOYERS ARE TEMPTED TO GET IN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ADVISORS RATHER THAN A DIVERSITY APPROACH THEN BECAUSE IT'S EASIER TO TICK THE BOXES THEN AND SAY YOU'VE DON'T IT AND SHIFTED THE RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD ANYTHING GO WRONG?

***P26:** I'd say there's a real popularity on specific equal opps personnel. Um that, especially in the eighties um and (..) that seems to be sort of waning away a bit, as far as I can tell. I mean just um, a friend of mine was the equal opps officer in [company name] and today's his last day, he's going to the Department of Health but um you know he was saying, he's not going to have a direct replacement. They're making it into a more mainstream role, integrating it with more HR things. Um and I think it sort of like, there's a time in people's evolution as an organisation where at a certain point in time it may actually be a good idea to have a specific focus. Now a lot of those, some focuses, yeah, really good and because they supported that it had enough status, it had enough power etc. but another time it's a tick in the box thing, 'oh well we've got an equal opportunities officer, they can deal with that, we don't have to' and they're not interested in cultural change, they're just interested in, well have we got the crèche and the ramp? You know, that's what...

***INT:** ...AVOID THE LITIGATION AND THAT'S THAT.

***P26:** That's right, yeah, let's avoid all that, but that's all. I think (..) organisations are starting to wake up to managing diversity and the benefits of that.

***INT:** WELL YOU SAID, EXACTLY, THAT DIVERSITY IS HIP NOW. THAT'S WHAT MADE ME THINK. IS IT REALLY PERCEIVED AS HIP NOW?

***P26:** Everybody, even if they're not doing, everybody is starting to call it managing diversity, even if what they're doing is traditional equal opportunities.

***INT: I'VE SENSED A LOT OF RESISTANCE AND ANTAGONISM ALMOST FROM EQUAL OPPORTUNITY-ISTS (LAUGHS) FOR WANT OF A BETTER WORD, AGAINST THE DIVERSITY TEAMS, IN THAT THEY SEE IT AS, UM ACTING A SMOKESCREEN IF YOU LIKE OVER THE INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS. HOW DO YOU COUNTER THAT?**

***P26: Well you see, if you're doing real managing diversity, you'd be looking at every way in which the organisation deals with people, and you'd be looking to make it fair (..) umm with policy, practice, perception. You know, so actually you've got such a wider remit, so that means that when a manager (..) you know, makes somebody's life hell because they just don't like them, that would be picked up. It would also be picked up if it was because they were a woman, if they were ethnic minority, if they had a disability, you know, if there was a sexual orientation issue, you know, that would, it would still pick those things up but it, you know, it's the fact that somebody is being treated unfairly which is the key thing, not whether or not they're, you know, if there's a gender issue, or seen as a gender issue, when it may or may not be, um gender, race and disability. So what managing diversity does is extends the remit and I think a lot of (..) I mean there is an equal opportunities industry and I think people feel very threatened by that. I think what they're worried about is that because it's a much more integrated approach, it's a much more business-oriented approach, they think that well, issues just won't be picked up, issues just won't be dealt with. But in fact, if it's being done properly, then they will and more issues would be picked up, and issues that have more impact on the lives of more people would be picked up. But I think they're just worried that there wouldn't be that focus. But I think it's sort of it's, I think it's bizarre that people focus on race issues, or focus on, I mean you see it all the time, especially in the Civil Service, where they'll be um looking at recruitment and selection on race issues, then they'll be looking at recruitment and selection on gender issues, then they'll be looking at recruitment and selection on age issues. You think, why don't you just look at it once? (laughs) You know, these separate projects which don't tie up to each other, and each one doesn't come up with anything stunning. They don't come up with anything new. They all come up with the same stuff. It's not like, 'ohh, well', what they'll come up with is that there's so much potential for bias in there, that if you did happen to have somebody biased, yes, they could get away with it.**

***INT: SO IT ALL COMES DOWN TO TRAINING THE TRAINER, OR THE INTERVIEWERS?**

***P26: So it comes down to training, it comes down to accountability, it comes down to all of those things that if you had a bias, whether it was a gender bias, whether it was a race bias, or a disability bias, whether it was an Aston Villa bias, whether it was you know, whatever bias it was, that it would be picked up and you wouldn't be able to operate it. And that's the key thing. And that means, yes, it hits that on gender, it hits that on race, it hits that on disability but it also hits it on everything else that somebody might have a particular fancy about. But people love to think in boxes, and it's a very box approach. And then they go, 'oh the appraisal process' and this is the key one at the moment, everybody is looking at their appraisal systems. You know, a few years ago, everybody was looking at recruitment and selection, now they think they've sorted that, so now it's, 'oh but people aren't progressing'. Let's look at race issues, and you say, well actually yeah, there may be one or two things that are particularly pertinent to race but they're sort of minor things on the edge, actually your appraisal system is crap. You know, your appraisal system is crap for everybody! So yes, it will be crap for people of every race! (laughs).**

***INT: SO DO YOU VIEW DIVERSITY AS BEING UM ICING ON THE CAKE IF YOU LIKE, OR THAT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IS PART OF DIVERSITY AS A WHOLE, OR...**

***P26: I'd say that traditional equal opportunities is part of managing diversity. Managing diversity is much bigger and much more fundamental. And it actually doesn't, if you think about well, I mean well we, before managing diversity became the term, I mean we were one of the first organisations to use it in this country but um (..) you know, what, what, we haven't actually changed what we do. When we were talking equal opportunities, when we were doing equal opportunities awareness courses, actually the major issues are about general unfairness. Um so, we haven't actually changed what we've been saying or doing, it just has another label. But what that has done is that has brought into stark contrast the people who think of equal opportunities as not equal opportunities but equal outcomes. And the people who actually do think of equal opportunities as equal opportunities and the more political people are more about**

equal outcomes. And that means, so they're more interested in getting the numbers right, they're more interested in doing things for particular groups in order to get the numbers right and that's what's driving them. And one of the examples I often use on the course, which tends to bring it into stark contrast was say, say in your monitoring figures that women weren't applying for promotion in your organisation. You found that in your monitoring process, so you go of, you go talk to women, you know, 'why aren't you applying' you have a look at their skills, you see that actually they have a similar skills level to men but men are applying and women aren't. So you go off and you try and find out, you actually find out that the issue is confidence. It's not skills but it is confidence. So, if you were taking a traditional managing diversity approach, no a traditional equal opportunities approach, what you would say is, 'look, men seem to be doing OK through the normal way of doing things. Women don't. There is an issue of confidence, there is an issue of confidence with women, therefore what we'll do is we'll put in this special positive action training course for women to increase their confidence. They then will start applying for promotion, men are applying for promotion already, and that will get the numbers right and it will even things out and we'll have sorted the problem.' Managing diversity approach would still pick up that women weren't applying for promotion. They would still go round and ask them questions. They would still identify that it was an issue of confidence but because the managing diversity approach is umm is not interested in getting the numbers right, it's more sort of, what you'd say to yourself is, 'I as an organisation am a bit aggrieved that there are people in my organisation that have a lot of skill and talent and we're not using it effectively. And we're not using it effectively because of a lack of confidence. Now we can see from our figures that there's a lot of women who have this but there must be some men as well and actually we want to use all the talent. Not just the women's talents, not just the men's but everybody's talents, so what we'll do is we'll set up a confidence building initiative, for anybody who has a lack of confidence as an issue.' Then OK, it may, there may be lots of women who go on it but there might be the odd man as well because that's holding them back as well. They go on this and then, you know, sort of blah blah, they get better confidence and they go for promotion. It's what, what's driving you. And the traditional equal opportunities thing is still about getting the numbers right and making it look right.

***INT: THAT'S QUITE A DIFFICULT PROBLEM THOUGH BECAUSE THEN IF YOU'RE SETTING UP, FOR EXAMPLE, CONFIDENCE TRAINING, ALRIGHT YOU'RE ASKING EVERYBODY, IF THEY WANT TO JOIN THEY CAN. BUT YOU'RE THEN SAYING THAT MORE MEN HAVE THESE SKILLS THAN WOMEN AND THE WAY TO VALUE THE DIFFERENCE OF THE WOMEN IS TO MAKE THEM LIKE THE MEN, RATHER THAN A STRUCTURAL CHANGE.**

***P26: Well if in fact, well yeah with confidence perhaps that's sort of, perhaps not the best example for that because actually you're holding yourself back, if that's an internal thing, then you know actually to get on in this organisation there are certain things that need to be done. So it may be that your manager is doing the best, you know, you might have a great manager who's encouraging you and saying, 'put yourself forward for promotion' and the person's still thinks oh no no no no no (..) you know, whatever. So it's sort of like that's an internal thing and if you can do something about that, that's fine. There are certain things, we all have development needs and that it's not necessarily looking at it, and that those development needs will be in different individuals, so yes there'll be lots of men who have that as an issue as well. Umm but it's just the difference in the two approaches really. Umm and it's also being realistic about the organisation in that you know, sort of, it's not necessarily about (..) the, you know, sort of, the worst scenario is that this a real male-dominated organisation, so if you're a woman you have to behave like a man and um, we'll change you, and if you behave like a man you'll get on. It's more about again, if you're talking about managing diversity, again this is the hard thing, if you're doing it properly, you're trying to create an organisation where everybody can contribute to it's best extent. That means it tends to be a culture neutral type of thing, it doesn't favour any particular group. Because it's inclusive, so you're trying to create that, so you wouldn't be like these macho organisations who are saying, well yeah, you can join our club if you look like us, behave like us and in fact are worse than us, you know. So you're not trying to mould people like that. But if you're taking a more strategic view about the organisation, what it's about and how, what it needs to do to be able to compete in the world markets and that there will be certain things which come more easily to some people than others, but it doesn't necessarily mean it will be men and women or whatever but there may be things that the organisation is trying to change about itself.**

But that's not necessarily a gender case or anything. We we need to be more innovative and there's lots of people in the organisation going, god, I haven't got a clue how to do that, and so you sort of say well let's have these brainstorming things and do this and try and tap into the talent and the ideas of everybody and, that's a culture change and you know, sort of the first few years, you might not get anything back from it. But once it's bedded down and people start feeling comfortable about raising ideas, lots of little things just start happening.

***INT: SO IT DOES WORK THEN? CAN YOU ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF CREATING THAT KIND OF...**

***P26: ...You can if you stick at it. I mean I certainly worked, in, I do a lot of work with [organisation name] and that's been interesting looking at the merger there because [organisation name] for a lot of (..) for a long time had a competency in their core competencies called Continuous Improvement and what it's looking is for everybody in the course of their work, no matter what level they are, to be looking for small improvements in what they're doing. And they can be, you know, so that was the culture, it's bedded down and people do that and they have lots of mechanisms which support that. That works well. They merged with [organisation name]. [organisation name] hasn't got that culture and what's happened in that merger is [organisation name] has come along in leaps and bounds but it was like, first it was very alien, 'oh what's all this rubbish, we're going to have all these regular team meetings and things', you know and yes, they did mix people up, so old [organisation name] and old [organisation name] came together. But it it's been interesting to see that because you know you think, oh that culture in [organisation name] developed over a long evolving period of time. Basically they took over [organisation name], rather than merged and uh, so uh [organisation name] was the dominant culture, they said continuous improvement is important, um you get brownie points for this, you get assessed on it if you want to move up a managerial level, it's one of the competencies, just like planning and organising is, just like interpersonal effectiveness is, like rational persuasion is, like broad-based thinking is and so, that sort of thing we assess. So there are lots of things to support people to turn their ideas to that. There were the mechanisms there, there was the rewards for doing it and um it's happened.**

***INT: SO THEY REALLY DO BELIEVE IN IT.**

***P26: Yeah. Now that's not sort of (tape ends here) they want to see instant results and people have got such a short term focus that they want to see instant results. I mean there was a wonderful, wonderful situation where a particular civil service agency asked us to go and present, to do some work. We'd taken their brief and said actually what you're doing is is going to be a waste of money because it's not going to work and we suggested something else. They invited to the presentation. They loved our ideas but they wanted something quick and dirty. And that's what the feedback was. We actually think, we're right and we'd actually, they wanted us to work with them on their strategy for it but they had to satisfy a couple of senior managers that they were doing something and they wanted something as visible as possible and as quick as possible and so they did this, knowing fine well that they are wasting their money because there's nothing to support it.**

***INT: BUT THEY HAD TO BE SEEN TO BE DOING SOMETHING.**

***P26: To be doing something, yeah. And so there are those sorts of pressures as well and I think within any equality strategy you have to take account of that. That you have to get some quick hits, and some visible hits but they're, they're there for a purpose. They're there for the perception, they're there for uh making people feel good um but you're probably not going to get a lot of value back from them but, so long as they're not the only things that you do. If you're doing other things which have much more long terms benefits then you'll get there. But what people do is they get into this, we'll just do this quick hit and this quick hit, then we'll do that quick hit and it's all disjointed and there's no strategy and it's initiative, initiative, initiative, doesn't build on anything and they wonder ten years down the line why they haven't moved on. And yet all their staff are like really cynical and they say to themselves, 'but we've put all this effort and resource into doing this', but you're doing the wrong things.**

***INT: IT'S SUCH A LONG TERM INVESTMENT THOUGH, IT MUST BE REALLY DIFFICULT SOMETIMES TO PERSUADE AN ORGANISATION THAT IT IS A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT. I MEAN HOW DO YOU OVERCOME IT? THAT INITIAL, CONSIDER IT. I MEAN ONCE YOU'RE IN THERE, AS YOU**

SAY, YOU ASK THEM TO THINK OF WHAT THE BUSINESS CASE IS AND THEY COME UP WITH SOME FANTASTIC IDEAS BUT THAT INITIAL, THIS IS GOING TO COST YOU A LOT OF MONEY JUST TO INVITE US IN TO GET TO THAT STAGE.

*P26: But we don't really get into that because we're not going out selling to people who don't want to be sold to. It's not like we do cold calling, it's not like we do anything like that. They come to us in the first place. So they have something that they have decided is good for the organisation. We may negotiate and discuss the best way to achieve their aims and they may then change (..)

*INT: THEY'RE WILLING PARTIES BY THE TIME THEY GET TO YOU.

*P26: You know, we don't sort of sit here and sort of ring people up and say, hey, we've got this really wonderful service, can we come and talk to you about it. We don't, you know, because we, I mean I know some consultancies might do that but we actually see ourselves as professional psychologists, so we're more equivalent to accountants or a solicitor. We offer a professional service. But you don't, you don't see accountants sort of ringing people up, cold calling, going, 'hey, I'm an accountant, do you need your books doing, oh, yeah, well the tax situation, have you got your self assessment form in?' you know, you get double-glazing people doing that but that's not the sort of thing.

*INT: NO, BUT BY ADVERTS AND THINGS.

*P26: No we don't advertise.

*INT: NOTHING AT ALL?

*P26: We don't advertise. We um, our reputation is purely by the work we do, from word of mouth, from conferences, from articles, books, that sort of thing.

*INT: AND THAT'S SUFFICIENT?

***P26: Absolutely. Absolutely. We've never advertised. Some people in a similar field do, but we don't. You know, that's a decision the business has made because it's in line with (..) what we see as a professional practice, as opposed to a management consultant.**

***INT: WELL TO BE HONEST I'D IMAGINED THAT'S HOW MOST WORK WAS DONE. I MEAN I WENT TO A CONFERENCE LAST YEAR THAT WAS AN OCC. PSYCH. ONE AND THERE WERE A LOT OF PEOPLE THERE WHO WERE BASICALLY "CONSULTANTS" AND THAT WERE WORKING FOR LITTLE COMPANIES AND HAVING TO FIND EVERY SCRAP OF BUSINESS THEMSELVES. AND THEY'D JUST BROUGHT THEIR RESEARCH TO THE CONFERENCE TO TRY AND FIND THE PIN THAT THEY COULD HINGE THEIR SALES TALK ON IF YOU LIKE. AND I WAS STUNNED THAT THIS WAS WHAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT.**

***P26: I know. I think it's a very hard work, work, if you're in a little organisation like that, you know. I mean I certainly, I'd actually think that none of the people who work at PK would survive in an organisation like that because we don't do that and we don't do that because of the sort of people that we are. We actually think it's horrible! (laughs) Oh no! Oh no! And we're just not those sorts of people. And it's been interesting when we've had um I mean just the culture of PK is that, we once had somebody join us from another consultancy and they stayed for a period of time but it just didn't work out. Part of that is that her particular way was to do lots of ringing people up and very um hard nosed business sell sell sell but that's not what we're about. And so her values and our values were like different and and and I know we, at one point we thought we actually, as we're growing, we cant' rely on word of mouth, we can't rely on reputation etc. to get enough business to survive and to grow and to flourish, we're going to have to do something else. And we talked about it but we'll never do those things, what we'll do is we'll make sure that we continue to do the research but we'll make sure we publish more. So it gets out under people's noses more now and they get to know more and that's how we do it, as opposed to straight advertising or flyers or you know, that sort of thing.**

***INT: I DIDN'T REALISE THAT. OK WELL I'M AWARE OF TIME BUT I'D JUST LIKE TO ASK YOU ONE MORE THING ABOUT UM, PROBABLY MORE**

EQUALITY BASED, BUT I HAVE THIS NOTION THAT IF, IF WORKING PATTERNS WERE MADE MORE FLEXIBLE THEN THAT'S A GOOD THING FOR EQUALITY BECAUSE YOU'RE ALLOWING MORE PEOPLE TO WORK BUT THEN YOU'RE LOSING THE BUSINESS ADVANTAGES OF RETAINING STAFF AND TRAINING THEM AND LOYALTY AND PRODUCTIVITY AND ALL OF THE PLUSES THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO BE ATTACHED TO THE BUSINESS CASE. IS THAT A PROBLEM IN REALITY OR IS THAT A THEORETICAL PROBLEM?

*P26: Umm, what do you mean by flexible working?

*INT: UMM, PART TIME WORKING, FLEXITIME, UH CONTRACT WORKING UH THINGS THAT HELP FOR EXAMPLE MOTHERS UM BUT THEN YOU REDUCE YOUR RIGHTS, LEGISLATION WISE...

*P26: The thing is you see you don't have to reduce your, if you were really, if an organisation did that, they would have to, there's not many organisations that see themselves as a charity and they're there to provide a lovely time for people and give them money and a lifestyle and all the rest of it. They're there to provide a service or to provide a something. They have a function and so it has to be helpful to the organisation now the argument is, so that it does mean that you can scan much more of the talent pool because there are people who have different needs, they have different lifestyles and different points in their career where they perhaps couldn't do a traditional nine to five job. And because business is becoming so much more flexible anyway, you don't necessarily need people to do a traditional nine to five job. Wouldn't it be great if we could have people here when we needed them and not here when we don't need them. You know, we don't have to be tied into this narrow thinking. So yes, you can have flexible working (..) now if you managing diversity effectively and (..) you would still, whoever you were, working with you, doesn't mean they have no commitment to you, they could be on a permanent contract but working certain hours, um you could give them as many employment rights as you wanted. You could actually give them lots and lots of things. Just because the law may not serve to protect certain people doesn't mean as an organisation and that's again that's part of your strategy. What is it that you want to achieve. If you're going to be and we'll get away with the least we can

give them, is it likely that you're going to have people saying, 'this is a great place to work, I really want to work there'? People are looking very much at their working lives.

***INT: SO IT NEEDN'T BE A DUALITY?**

***P26:** So it doesn't have to be. Now for some organisations it will be and you know, you'll see some contract staff, they've got no commitment to their contract staff, they don't train them up, their contract staff. Yeah, so you're not going to hit your managing diversity objectives. And and even if, you know sort of especially where they've got like a significant number of contract staff umm then and the other are sort of permanent contract, you know, on a permanent contract with that stuff, that does tend to spill over to the people who are on the permanent contracts because if they can treat them like that, you can treat me like that any time you like. You know and they have a few more employment rights, legally but in fact, you're quite happy to treat people like that, that's the culture you're creating. So you know sort of like, you're shooting yourself in the foot. You're not, you're not interested in managing diversity. That's the thing. If people can get their heads round, what does it mean to manage diversity effectively, it's about treating people effectively, treating people well, making them want to work for you, not 'oh I have to work for you because nobody else would give me a job'. It's a very different thing and that does mean, yes we train and develop people because we see them as an investment for the future.

***INT: SO YOU ARE ATTRACTING THE RIGHT QUALITY IN THE FIRST PLACE?**

***P26:** Yeah and it's sort of like it's a win-win situation um but what people do is again is the short term-ism and they say, 'oh well, we've been told to cut budgets, well what can we do, well we can cut the money off them, we don't have to pay them a pension and we don't have to pay them this' and they get into that and it's like, you think, it's so (..) um noodle, noodle-headed really! And then they go 'oh, well we've got all this absenteeism and we've got all this out and you know you have people here on a contract but they bugger off! You know, they leave and they go somewhere else!' You say, yeah, wonder why that is! (laughs) and uh, so, it doesn't have to be.

***INT: DOES IT WORK?**

***P26:** It's difficult to say I mean because each organisation is different. I mean I know organisations are always saying, oh can you tell us a benchmark organisation, but the thing is you can't. I mean unless you've worked in an organisation, you don't know what it's really like. You can't benchmark, you know if you're talking about managing diversity, because it's beyond the sort of high profile initiative of a ramp and a crèche, then um you know it's about what happens on a day to day basis in the fabric of the organisation. So unless you've worked in one, you can't identify whether one's good or bad and what you will find is that organisations, any organisation will be good in some areas and bad in others. You know, they just, they're no such thing as the perfect organisation but what you can say is that there are organisations that are seriously trying to get there. So I always think it's funny when people are 'oh benchmark, benchmark', and I say, well what do you want to benchmark against? You know?

***INT: HMM, IT'S SUCH A SUBTLE PROCESS.**

***P26:** I can give you some examples of some things in some organisations that they're doing very well but within the same organisation on something else, they're really cocking it up! (laughs) you know? So you know, it's not consistent.

***INT: ONE FINAL AND MORE PERSONAL QUESTION, COULD YOU DO THIS JOB IF YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE IN IT AS MUCH AS YOU DO?**

***P26:** Umm, umm (..) I don't know. I don't know. It's um, you could do the mechanics of it. You could definitely do the mechanics of it but I think it's its', it's the hard decisions like when you're being pushed to do something that you know (..) isn't right, would you, what other conflicting pressure would there be? Umm, I, I don't know, I suppose, I think if you (..) if you felt quite neutral, you'd probably be OK. Because then, say if you worked at PK, then you could just say well, our organisational values are this, this is our area of work.. If we cock something up in this area, that's going to have such a terrible impact on our future business (laughs) so you could do that. I think if you were actively against it, you'd find it very difficult, but if you're sort of neutral, you know, 'I don't believe or disbelieve in it really, you know, I think it's

probably a good idea in a lot of cases but there may be some times when you don't think' but umm so I don't think you, I don't think, because I'm not a, I wouldn't say I was um like a champion or an enthusiastic person because I'm quite sort of analytical but I'm not a, I'm not sort of a charismatic inspirational type of person, Binna's much more like that. Umm but uh, you know, it sort of fits with my values and I believe it, I believe it to be sensible, you know, it's like and I can't understand why people aren't doing it because it's just obvious isn't it (laughs) you know, but it's not sort of like, it's not like a political crusade or anything like this, 'oh I'm here to support people who are having a hard time in organisations.

***INT: NO I JUST WONDERED BECAUSE EVERYONE WHO'S WORKING IN THE FIELD DOES BELIEVE IN IT. YOU DON'T GET PEOPLE WHO ARE ANTI IT WORKING IN THE FIELD, SO THEN EVERYONE HAS A MINDSET IF YOU LIKE AND THEY'RE PRODUCING THESE POLICIES THAT JUST AREN'T REACHING THE GENERAL PUBLIC, OR THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T START OFF, I MEAN IF EVERYONE STARTED OFF WITH THE SET OF VALUES THAT WE HOLD, THEN THERE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THE PROBLEM IN THE FIRST PLACE. SO I WAS JUST WONDERING HOW THAT ALL FITS IN.**

***P26: Yeah, it's interesting. It's interesting because um we're often (..) I mean the way we work at PK is interesting because a lot of other people in the field work at a much more emotional level, whereas we don't. We don't work, we work at a rational, logical level, which fits with my style as well but I know, I keep coming across people, you know, it's very much about, it is about feelings, it is about morality, it is about those sort of things where as it's not, it's just, oh no, if you've got an organisation and you want to, you know, if you're paying people a salary um they're just going to be more effective if you treat them well, you know, sort of like, you would want your organisation to be effective, wouldn't you? You know, it's sort of like, it's sort of (..)**

***INT: TREATING PEOPLE DECENTLY.**

***P26: That's right, you know, sort of like a simple thing. And of course I suppose there are some people who's um, those old ex-managers (laughs) you know who say, 'well, you should keep them in fear and they're a load of rubbish and you need to keep them**

under da da da or they'll just take advantage' if you believe those sorts of things, I think it would be very very difficult to do this job. In other word the use of Y style manager, or whatever they are, you know the more sort of people oriented who believe that if you give people a chance that they'll come good and all the rest of it. I think it's probably that basic um division really about what are your fundamental beliefs in people? Um whether or not you believe in equality and fairness. I think that probably guides it and do you think people are nasty horrible things who are there to take advantage of you or do you think people are you know, if you treat them well, they'll treat you well. And I think that's a fundamental thing and I think you need to be in the second category.

***INT: OK. THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED.**

PARTICIPANT NO. 27 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

***INT: OK, WELL IF YOU COULD START BY BRIEFLY DETAILING WHAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY IS.**

***P27: Sure, yeah, I'm an HR officer here and because of that I get involved in the recruitment side also um the company set up a diversity task force. That probably was eighteen months or two years ago but that that sort of turned (inaud) to look at how we could be more diverse in the company. Um one thing I should, if I could just back track a little bit because I don't know how much you know about [organisation name] attempted culture. They're quite um they're quite a values orientated company and they're a bit because of it in some ways but if you don't understand that then it's difficult to understand how the rest fits in. What I, what I did and this is just a copy for you (HANDS INTERVIEWER A COPY OF THEIR COMPANY ASPIRATION STATEMENTS) because it will help I think as we go along. Like most companies [organisation name] has got a mission statement that says we want to be the best at what we're doing but then we have an aspirations statement which is about um, so we're going to be the best by doing this. Um it's all about teamwork and trust, recognition, communication but there's also a diversity aspect in there as well. This has been um in place for about eight or ten years in writing and one of the reasons is that [organisation name] is actually owned by [organisation name] great-great grand nephew, so because they don't answer to shareholders as such they can sort of spend more time doing internal things. So anyone who joins the company anyway as part of their induction in the first year would go on a three and a half, four day course where you go into these areas in a bit more detail. So as long as anyone's been here by a year, they've spent half a day thinking about appreciating diversity and what it means. So the company's got (..) people still take it very personally but I don't know, I'm half-Irish or I wear glasses, or I, whatever but that means me but at least everybody has sorted out what it's like, maybe been on the wrong side of a group or something and then that's actually followed through um because of the diversity task force a couple of years ago. We're now also rolling out a diversity training course to every employee, so diversity is understood within the company and on both the aspirations course and the diversity course, which**

will be for about three or four days, there's always a senior manager on board, so it's definitely like the company's involved and that's what the management team want. Otherwise I think it would fail miserably. So if you want to talk about it in more detail I can talk about what we actually go through on the diversity course but it's very much, here's some information and people talk about it. So it covers sort of black, white, well any colour really, it covers disability, it makes people think about when they were in an in or an out group which is when, you know, when you're on the wrong side of the majority I suppose. Um I don't know, sexuality, quite a few things like that, so that, I just wanted to tell you a bit about that side of it because then it helps everything fit into place a bit better. So in terms of this task force there were about twelve people from all sectors of the business, sort of warehouse, retail, um and got together to try and decide how we could do more about it because it was a management objective that we were trying to become more diverse. I think part of that has been being an American company as well, that this is one of the key words that are used. So I'm involved in the recruitment and training side of things but also because I was in the task force.

***INT: SO YOU ACTUALLY HAVE QUITE A LOT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR INCREASING THE DIVERSITY?**

***P27: Yeah.**

***INT: SO HAS THERE EVER BEEN AN AIM, I MEAN IS THE AIM INCREASING THE DIVERSITY OF THE WORK FORCE IN ITSELF?**

***P27: Yeah, I mean, well, there were big conversations about, did that mean did we want, I don't know, five percent Afro-Caribbean and we decided completely against that but what we do do is we would always take the best person for the job but we try to attract a wider audience to apply for the job. So for example, um we would always advertise in the relevant publications, so I don't if was um a local secretary it would be the local paper but we would also then always advertise by other routes as well just to try and get a bit more, I suppose it's a bit of marketing the company but also trying to get some other interests. I've got, again I've got a list just of companies, not companies, of magazines and publications that we've used; Disability Now and employment agencies for disabled people um a local junior school to try and get mums**

returning to work, using the Voice, Caribbean Eye and so we've tried all sorts of things and um, if I'm absolutely honest, we hardly get any applications at all from the alternative way of advertising but we get an awful lot of good publicity and good comments. We get people ringing in our recruitment agency, we advertise through a recruitment agency, saying, 'I'm actually not suitable for this job but I thought it was a really good idea' um and that was almost what we're trying to promote. So if the disabled person who read it actually isn't appropriate for that job but might see another one, at least they've got the message that we would we would encourage someone like that to apply.

***INT: AND YOU GAIN A GOOD REPUTATION BY DOING SO.**

***P27:** Having said we're not successful, we have been successful recruiting through local women's groups and getting women back. It's really on, the thing we've found is that even if somebody reads an ad in, I don't know, the Asian Times or, the Asian Times is one of them, whatever it's called, um the actual number they put on the application form is the one that was in the Indep, they put the application form, sorry, they put the number on, the reference number that was in the advert and in the box that says 'where did you see this vacancy?' they say the Independent or the Guardian. So it's a bit of a stigma, this is just my perceived opinion but there is a bit of a stigma about applying through a, I don't know, uh minority magazines.

***INT: SO THEY'RE STILL CONCERNED THAT THEY'LL BE VIEWED POORLY AS A MINORITY MEMBER THEN?**

***P27:** Yeah. But we get um a wide variety of people applying through the local press anyway so it's just something we try and then what we also do, um I haven't done it recently so I can't give the exact figures, is we would also then just look at, we don't look at the current population because um I personally and I said this, I don't think it's right to make you tick a box to say where you're from, so what we do instead is we just look purely on a sort of race, racial orientation um race origins really, where people have applied from, sorry where people who have applied come from, so is it white, Caribbean, white European, white UK, whatever and then we just do an analysis of the local population and then the sort of types of people we've had apply and it's literally

now at twenty percent in both cases. We haven't done that for a while so I actually can't tell you how we're doing.

***INT: BUT THE AIM IS TO GET A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LOCAL POPULATION?**

***P27: Yeah uh huh. We'd be worried if it was too much one way or another because then obviously we'd be, something wrong with the local population.**

***INT: SO YOU'RE PLAYING A NUMBERS GAME ESSENTIALLY THEN?**

***P27: Really yeah, we'd we definitely didn't want to have targets because we felt that's putting people in the job for all the wrong reasons rather than the right person and it works OK. It's doubled the recruitment costs because we're advertising at least twice as much but, we're advertising the same vacancy twice, um but we are getting quite a lot of good publicity. The other side of that is um, we've had in people like the local disabled group and things coming in and this building is very old, I don't know if you realised as you came in but we're actually moving to a brand new building this time next year, so we've had them in when we've been building a new building, they've advised us on um, 'well there's no point having a disabled loo there, you might as well have it here' so at least we're sort of, we're not really set up here. If we did employ someone, we'd sort it out but they probably wouldn't be employed in the area where all their colleagues were but umm at least at the new site we can, but just basic things like we don't have a lift here and you know we don't have ramps. You know we can cope with someone who's, although if we had someone good who had come in we would sort something out. Um because that's the ideal aim. And then the other side of things is we were looking as a company at having, you know, I think it's the TIP, the disabled, Positive About Disabled People, whatever it's called um but the company decided and I think wrong, this is my opinion, I thought it was wrong not to use that, the feeling being that we've had so few registered disabled people but it was the argument about well if you're registered disabled or are you disabled and, um so I thought we should use that because I thought that would help and that's what the disabled groups that we'd been in touch with had said as well, that would really encourage them, as well as seeing that it's**

in Disability Now or something. So that's sort of the way the company stands at the moment in terms of doing things.

***INT: SO THE AIM OF INCREASING THE DIVERSITY IS PURELY TO REPRESENT YOUR LOCAL POPULATION?**

***P27:** Well no the aim is, um if you appreciate diversity, you've got people from different ways of life, it will improve the business because they'll think of different things and um. I mean it talks about it here in more detail (SHOWING ME THE STATEMENTS AGAIN) but um [organisation name] is all about putting your ideas forward. It's very um very open to ideas and improvement and staying ahead of the competition and rather than have you know white forty year olds with ties who would think the same thing, it's a business way of doing it. We also, the company also has um links with the local community so we've been quite intent on building those up as well but the main reason for doing it is because employees should be treated fairly and it will improve business.

***INT: SO ARE THEY DOING THIS OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF THEIR HEART OR ...**

***P27:** ...It's quite philanthropic, I don't think I said that quite right but you know what I mean, it's not out of the goodness of their heart, it's to make money.

***INT: AND HOW DOES IT MAKE MONEY?**

***P27:** Because if you have people with good ideas then there'll be stemming some new ideas that you know could could make us the new 501 or something.

***INT: SO YOU'RE INCREASING CREATIVITY OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?**

***P27:** Yeah um just different ways of approaching things is that [organisation name] as company is very cash rich and can afford to do nice things as well and there's all sorts of charitable things they do but because the head office is in San Francisco, which is sort of the gay capital of the world, um about fifteen, well ten or fifteen years ago they had to start approaching AIDS issues then so you know we don't really have an issue with it here but about that length of time we had to start thinking about things in a bit

more depth um which is I think maybe why the company has some vision, it's a bit ahead of some of the people around at the time. It's not just out of goodness of heart, there's more to it than that. I mean it's not a charity, it's a business.

***INT: WELL YES THAT'S WHY I ASKED. THERE ARE SO MANY PERCEIVED BENEFITS IF YOU LIKE OF HAVING A DIVERSE WORK FORCE BUT NOBODY EVER CHECKS WHETHER IT DOES ACTUALLY MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE. THEY JUST ASSUME THAT IF YOU HAVE MORE IDEAS THEN IT WILL BE MORE PROFITABLE.**

***P27: Yeah. And we don't check it.**

***INT: WELL IT'S SO DIFFICULT TO CHECK AS WELL, WHICH IS WHY PEOPLE DON'T.**

***P27: Well yeah (laughs). We check in on um, well I suppose that people aren't doing the negative things because I suppose that's the easiest thing to check really in terms of all of these things are linked into performance management so unless you do all of these things then you don't get pay rewards. So um they're, everyone's objectives, we have objectives that are set every year, we'd have one of these issues built into it, to improve in something so there's open conversations. It might not be diversity it might be about communication, so where things like giving feedback tend to be one of the things that people aren't very good at. Umm and we can check in that way as well.**

***INT: SO THE COST THEN, THE EXTRA COST OF RECRUITING, IS IT FELT THAT THAT IS BALANCED OUT BY THE PROFITS YOU MAKE FROM HAVING A DIVERSE TEAM?**

***P27: Yeah I mean last year, we just did a review of how much it would cost and everything at year end and I mean it would be an easy way to save some money really by just advertising as we used to or to go through recruitment agencies but we decided not to do that. Well the management team decided not to do that um because they felt it was important to sort of get the message across and that everything was working well in terms of the business. So yeah, it it's, it's OK to double to cost was the message that**

sort of came back. Doubling the cost is a bit of an exaggeration but it's along those lines.

***INT: BUT THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF RECOUPING IT FROM ANYTHING ELSE, THAT WAS JUST AVAILABLE FOR DIVERSITY?**

***P27: Yeah, that was just it.**

***INT: SO THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE REPUTATION IS OF UTMOST VALUE TO [ORGANISATION NAME] AS AN ORGANISATION.**

***P27: Um yeah. [organisation name] is quite keen on sort of stake holders in the local community in the sense of, just another example of it that's nothing to do with this is um there's a couple of, well there's a charitable group within the company, so it's just employees volunteer, and for every pound they raise, the company put another four pounds towards it as long as it's a local charity. So they, they do, their reputation and their their sort of community they're working in are important.**

***INT: SO IS THERE A LOT OF UM (..) LIKE THE SALES VALUE OF HAVING A REPRESENTATIVE WORK FORCE, THAT YOU'RE REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR CLIENT BASE AS WELL, THAT PEOPLE LIKE THAT AS WELL, IS THERE...**

***P27: Uh I think there's a bit of that and also in terms of um the advertising because the [organisation name] brand is quite strong and the company try and protect the brand image. In more recent adverts they've been trying to um, not necessarily to do with diversity but just in terms of target market, our target market is very young and up until about two or three years ago we always had white people in, either male or female but they were white and good looking. Um and the idea is now in that um our advertising, whether it be on the telly or in the press there's more (..) average looking people for a start but there's also more blacks or whatever nationality. One of the recent ads you know had a blind person in it and the idea is if you do that you (..) create sales but you identify with another set of people and they might go out and buy a product, so there's that side of it too.**

***INT: OK, SO THAT'S THE REPUTATION SIDE OF IT. UM, WITHIN THE ORGANISATION, AND YOU'VE OBVIOUSLY GOT QUITE A STRUCTURED PROGRAMME FOR DIVERSITY AND TEAMS AND MANAGEMENT ARE COMMITTED TO IT AND ALL THE REST. DO YOU HAVE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY IN ADDITION TO IT OR IS THIS HOW YOU WORK?**

***P27: Yeah we do, sorry I should have brought it down really.**

***INT: NO THAT'S ALL RIGHT, I DON'T NEED TO SEE IT.**

***P27: It's um it's just in the um in the employee handbook, so everybody would have access to it and it basically just says it doesn't matter if you're black, white, male, female, it says handicapped, which is a word we're kind of trying to move away from, trying to rewrite it (laughs) but whatever, you should be treated the same as somebody else. So it's that open. It doesn't talk about, you know, we'll have half the male, half the male population for the management team and half female, anything like that, it's just a general statement about everyone should be treated fairly and if they're not then someone will do something about it.**

***INT: SO YOU DO HAVE LIKE A DISCIPLINARY PATH?**

***P27: Yeah, um hmm, yeah, there is one that um fortunately hasn't been used for a while but yeah we do have one.**

***INT: AND ARE PEOPLE AWARE OF THE POLICY? ARE THEY TRAINED IN THE POLICY AS WELL AS THE ASPIRATIONS?**

***P27: They're not trained in the policy as such but when they join they have the, it's in the employee handbook and they have a log book, about twenty other pages of information and they have to sign that to say they've read and understood it so I would assume, I would read it before I signed it in case I'm signing my life away (laughs) so I assume they would!**

***INT: IT'S NOT ONE OF THOSE THAT THE SECRETARY PASSES UNDER YOUR NOSE AND SAYS SIGN THIS? (LAUGHS)**

***P27:** No no, they get a couple of weeks to sign it in. And then obviously (..) when they get to this stage, they'll know about it, so in terms of the aspirations course. So it could be that they might have a year, up to a year, where they didn't understand. In some cases that would only be a couple of weeks, or months. Um when we run through um the induction and the employee handbook, we pull things out. Um to be honest if ever I do it, I only say we've got an equal opportunities policy, I don't go into any sort of detail. Um we have quite a few policies (laughs) so it's just sort of another one. So I suppose potentially that's an area that that, that might be a problem but the culture is such a big thing here that I think if somebody um did you know have to have some problems with equal opportunities, it would become apparent very quickly.

***INT:** YEAH. SO THEY'RE REALLY QUITE DISTINCT SECTIONS THEN, THE EQUALITY AND THE DIVERSITY?

***P27:** Well they kind of lead into each other um that the fact that in the equal opps statement it talks about, it doesn't matter where you're from, kind of lines um and then that's sort of what's covered in the diversity training as well. Um we're not kind of brainwashing people or anything like that and I know I was worried before I went on the course that it was like, one of the issues is about humour, using humour, and I went along with the attitude that you're not telling me that I can't tell sarcastic jokes and you know, if it's in the right place, then I don't care. Um so I, I mean I had a bit of a problem going along with the, (inaud) going along as a trainer and I wasn't happy at all about that but it's almost like, well here are the facts and (..) just be careful. Um it's no sort of brainwashing exercise. And we've gone to somewhere, particularly the sort of um gay issue comes up and you have people sort of in their fifties and sixties who say it's completely wrong and it's against God and if that's the way they feel, that's OK but just (..) just kind of don't be out, you know, overtently (sic) sort of um you know, well you know...

***INT:** ...SO IT'S VERY MUCH WORK BEHAVIOURS THAT YOU'RE TRYING TO MOULD INTO THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE RATHER THAN ATTITUDES?

***P27:** Yeah. Definitely. And this sort of, you know, if you're um out and out sort of you know showing racism or anything else, it's not accepted at work. If you want to do that on your own time, it's not that's acceptable, but it's kind of do what you want.

***INT:** YEAH WELL THERE'S NOT A LOT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT THEN. (..) SO DOES IT WORK?

***P27:** (..) I think so but then again I would because I only see the good bits really um. In terms of the recruitment advertising, it kind of works but we don't, we don't get a hundred disabled applicants every time we advertise so in that way it doesn't, it's all about sort of getting the message across. The diversity training works to a certain extent. If people have got you know out and out views on something, the truth is we're never going to change them and why should we anyway, really? But it gets people thinking.

***INT:** SO YOU DO DECLARE WHAT'S ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR AND WHAT ISN'T AT WORK OR?

***P27:** No no, it's, there's nothing about this is how you should be. It tends to be um for example, just one of the exercises, the disabled exercise and um it's a bit, a bit sort of dated in terms of, you've got no arms and you've got no legs and you've got to build a tower or something and then people talk about it. So it's all about giving information in one way or another and then people discussing it. So if someone on that table disagrees with someone on that table, it's up to them to sort it out. So the trainers are really just there as facilitators. They don't say that's right or that's wrong other than an out and out statement like, you know, all blacks should be, I don't know, killed or whatever, then obviously someone would react to that from the facilitation team but I would hope that someone would react from within the thirty delegates before we did. Um so, it works in terms of, I think it makes people think.

***INT:** SO YOU'RE RAISING AWARENESS?

***P27:** Yeah, and particularly um it's kind of an odd way of showing it but when people come back in the work place, you hear statements being made and someone laughing and saying, well that wasn't very diverse! And you think, well at least it's an influence,

OK it was a joke but there's been some sort of recognition of the some statement there that maybe shouldn't have been made um and the fact as well that um not quite everyone's gone through the diversity programme at the moment because of new starts and things but um over ninety percent of [organisation name] in the UK population has. So even I went on it a year ago but you as a colleague went on it next week, that raises my level of awareness again. And then we're talking about at the moment, the management team are talking about putting in a one day follow up or something, just to see, was it worth doing and has it helped and what's happened. So that's something that really has been driven from America as well. That diversity thing has been run out throughout the world. Um obviously it's different because in, I don't know, I'm sure in Japan or somewhere if you talk about open communications, it's just completely different from communicating here, so it gets tweaked. I'd say most of the time it works. I think it's an expensive process. Um having said that I'd much prefer it, for me as an employee, to work for a company that actually cares about that rather than my previous background was for a company that wasn't making an awful lot of money and they'd do anything as long as the cash came in. Um and I didn't like some of the things that happened there because I felt that they were completely unethical. So the ethics side for me is quite a plus as an employee because I like working here. I've never been told to do anything I don't like, you know, or at least there's good reason behind it.

***INT: AND DO YOU THINK MOST EMPLOYEES FEEL LIKE THAT AS WELL?**

***P27: We have very low staff turnover.**

***INT: YOU DO?**

***P27: Yeah and I think that's part of it. And we tend to have quite long, well obviously associated with low staff turnover, but we have quite long service as well. Which is good and bad but you know, people don't don't rush to go.**

***INT: SO THAT'S A COST AND BENEFIT?**

***P27: Yeah. That's right.**

***INT: SO DO YOU THINK THAT PEOPLE ARE ATTRACTED TO WORK HERE BECAUSE OF THE REPUTATION THAT'S BEEN BUILT AND BECAUSE PEOPLE KNOW THAT IT'S A CARING ORGANISATION, OR DO THEY GET THE JOB AND THEN FIND THAT OUT AFTER?**

***P27: Most people know beforehand. If they're local, they would know beforehand because most people know someone who got the cheap jeans, who said a bit about the company um. It depends. If you um more sort of (..) people who would have access to the internet would know, because we have a lot of company information on there. I don't know if you've ever seen it but that would have, they would have quite a lot of access about what a caring company it was. Other than that they probably wouldn't know until they walked into reception. We've actually got a temp on reception today, I don't know how chatty she was but...**

***INT: SHE WAS VERY CHATTY, SHE WAS LOVELY.**

***P27: Was she (laughs) but it normally starts there. Um but just in terms of the way that the company isn't at all sort of, it's very informal. And sort of other stuff you know people just sort of start chatting the moment they're in reception and that kind goes through, so you'd have an inkling then. Um we have a pay policy that's average plus five percent for the local, well for whatever area you're in um. So I think the high salaries that sometimes you would get by coming here would give you an indication as well that maybe it's a company that's a bit better than average I suppose.**

***INT: HAVING (INAUD) I SUPPOSE! (LAUGHS)**

***P27: Yeah, (laughs) all that side of things!**

***INT: WELL NO IT'S NICE BECAUSE I (..) I DIDN'T THINK THAT THERE WAS ENOUGH UM, POWER IN IT. NOW AS AN EMPLOYEE I WOULDN'T LOOK AROUND, OR WOULDN'T HAVE LOOKED AROUND AND SAID, OH I'LL GO AND WORK FOR THEM BUT I WOULDN'T WORK FOR THEM BECAUSE OF THEIR STAFF POLICIES BASICALLY. I DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS ENOUGH MARKET CHOICE TO DO THAT KIND OF THING. I MEAN OBVIOUSLY ONCE**

YOU GET INTO SOMEWHERE THEN THEY GET THE BENEFITS OF LOW TURNOVER. BUT I DIDN'T THINK...

*P27: ...I would do that though personally just because I worked for a company that I hate, I mean I hated the policies that were going on and it was because they were so poor really in terms of money um and having come here, if I ever apply for another job, I'd want to know a bit about this side of things before I went for it.

*INT: YEAH, WELL I STARTED OFF IN INVESTMENT BANKING WHERE THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF MONEY BUT THEY REALLY DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THEIR STAFF AT ALL AND IT WAS JUST AWFUL BUT THAT WAS A PERSONAL CHOICE FOR ME. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD LOOK AT THAT.

*P27: I think people, what we tend to find is people have come here and have worked here and then they go somewhere else, they tend to then, you know because you end up speaking to people, say, I wish I'd realised before I'd left, what it was like. Because I mean I know what it's like, I've been here for a few years now and I now take everything for granted because you do, that's human nature um so I, yeah. The other thing is that it's not just about diversity, it's because (..) [organisation name], just a bit of history, [organisation name] um got sold onto the American stock exchange I think in the eighties or late seventies um and the family still hold the majority of the shares but they obviously had to pay back all the share holders, or stock holder. And it, um, they hated it so much, that they actually bought it all back again. They hated having to pay outside people rather than sort of rewarding internal people. Now that all sounds a bit too good to be true really, oh it all sounds so wonderful (laughs) but they do but there are various things like that as well. I mean there's a thing as well about the employee reward, you might have heard of the big bonus we're getting in 2000?

*INT: NO I HAVEN'T.

*P27: It's a year's salary, as a bonus. There was a lot of publicity a couple of years ago about it um. And part of that is that , you know, it gets people to stay with us a bit longer, but the other side is that, it's just genuinely, you know, genuinely for sort of the

goodness of the hearts kind of thing, so the Chair people could have it as well. So I know I sound like I'm preaching (laughs) but most of the time it works. I think sometimes diversity um can be used a little bit as well. You know if if we're saying it's OK to be, the company says it's OK to be whatever you are and we appreciate you for your differences, then I've had conversations with people who say, you know I disagree entirely with him um because I do believe I do believe that women are better in this job than men or something. It's like well you can't really say that, you open up then, well you tell me you're appreciating my opinions, so why don't you listen? And it's a bit of a sort of a double edged sword sometimes but most things you can prove or disprove relatively easily.

***INT: SO DOES EVERYBODY LOOK FOR LOOPHOLES THEN?**

***P27: But I think that happens, whatever you do.**

***INT: SO DOES IT RAISE UM EXPECTATIONS THEN, RAISING PEOPLE'S AWARENESS? LIKE YOU SAID YOU KNOW, YOU'VE BEEN HERE A WHILE, SO THIS IS NORMAL NOW. DOES IT HAVE THAT KIND OF EFFECT, THAT BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF WHAT'S GOING ON, THEY SUDDENLY EXPECT AN AWFUL LOT MORE AND THEY DON'T APPRECIATE THE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN DONE ALREADY?**

***P27: I think generally yes, probably not just in the area of diversity um. Maybe just because it's, it, it's really difficult to work out exactly what it means and it, like you sort of said, it means different things to different people and I think it can be used so it can raise expectations in some of the wrong areas. If I didn't get a job I could say well it's because I wasn't the black person that applied um, there's, we would always give feedback and stuff that would try and hopefully stop that but one of the ones that does raise expectations is this empowerment one. About um, well you've told me you're going to empower me and I can do what I want, so I've just spent all this money and now you're telling me I shouldn't have done. Um and with all of them it's like trying to get a balance and the problem is that because it's up to the it's up to the employees to own these really because the culture says, HR can't say, well you must do this. So sometimes it doesn't work quite right. So, so far we haven't had a diversity problem in**

terms of expectations but that's because it's still quite new. I would think it will happen in the future. Hopefully it won't though I would think, I can see issues coming up because of it.

***INT: SO UM (..) YOU'VE GOT YOUR WHOLE LIST OF ASPIRATIONS HERE, HOW MUCH A PART IS DIVERSITY OF IT? I MEAN IT'S ONE OF THE LIST BUT THE WHOLE CULTURE SEEMS TO BE GEARED TOWARDS TREATING PEOPLE FAIRLY BASICALLY. HOW MUCH DO YOU SEE AS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY PLAYING A ROLE IN THAT?**

***P27: Umm, I think they're a kind of minor role in that treating people fairly is kind of the main thing so it shouldn't always matter where you're from and what your background is as long as you have the right person for the job or you receive the right training or whatever. Um I think it's the culture that actually drives it in this business rather than um you know if suddenly it became legally, a legal requirement that you had to match the local population in terms of people's background, that wouldn't be our reason for doing it, it would be the reason that it's you know already, hopefully should be doing it as a company because people want to be treated fairly.**

***INT: SO IT'S A FAIRLY SMALL PART OF IT?**

***P27: Yeah. It's just sort of, I suppose it's like a supporting back up and at least it (..) treating people fairly, if I joined a company and they said we're into treating people fairly, it would be like, what? You know! And this kind of breaks it down and structures it a bit more.**

***INT: SO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY MEAN?**

***P27: Yeah.**

***INT: AND THE DIVERSITY ITSELF, I'M LOOKING HERE (AT THE ASPIRATIONS LIST) YOU'VE STILL GOT AGE, SEX AND ETHNIC GROUP, SO YOU'RE STILL USING THE TRADITIONAL EQUAL OPPORTUNITY GROUPINGS.**

***P27:** Yeah uh, with colour etc. it depends, I mean if you um (..) on this diversity course is what we've been trying to do as well is always get a person from another European country and just because it's another view and it was someone I think from Spain who was saying that rather than have that, their ethnic categories include gypsies, because gypsies in Spain, I think it was Spain, are treated appallingly. Um and we we look at, they're the main ones because they're kind of, the obvious ones if someone walks in the room, it's difficult to see if someone's adopted or, not had a degree, or whatever. I mean we've changed small things like, you don't need to have a degree to do some jobs, you just need to be of you know graduate calibre and, it's, so that's sort of changed a little bit but they would be the main ones just because you can spot those quite easily.

***INT:** AND DO YOU MONITOR ON THE BASIS OF RACE AND SEX?

***P27:** Um we monitor application forms on sex and ethnic origin but we don't monitor anything else, and it's literally a page that you can pull out of the application form so we could sort of hide that from the managers if necessary, we never have. Yeah, that's all we would do.

***INT:** SO DO YOU SEPARATE THE...

***P27:** ...We don't at the moment but we have the facility to pull that bit off. Normal the sifting process isn't just the manager on their own. If the manager came back and only wanted to interview all of one category, we'd go back to them (laughs) and say, you know, maybe you should look again! Something actually, it talks about age there and if you think about all those sort of the legislation, it's all about the fact that you know, nobody takes on older people any more. We're actually the wrong side of that and we deliberately try and take on young people because we've got I think about two under 25s in the whole building. And part of the reason behind that is just that, we're actually quite a small company, there's only two hundred people employed by [organisation name] in the UK.

***INT:** REALLY?

***P27:** The reason behind that is, most of our stores are franchised out, so we kind of, you know that's franchisees but having said that we do have a separate production site

in Scotland, but they don't report into here, they report through a different structure. So we have very few opportunities, so we don't really have like a graduate training programme or anything like that, so we've always recruited placement students and then recently, even if it's just a temporary job, we try and go to a young person's agency or through the local (inaud) agency, so at least we're getting, we're giving opportunities to younger people, even if we maybe can't do anything on a permanent basis. So we have a lot of old people here because of our low staff turnover but we don't have many young models. I mean most of our staff turnover is actually created because we're such a small company that it it's not like um you're a junior title and then you're the senior and then you're the manager. It just doesn't work like that, so the people who tend to leave us, big generalisation here, but tend to be you know, people in mid-twenties to mid-thirties who want to move on after two years and there's just, there hasn't been a position created here.

***INT: SO WHAT DO YOU DO FOR YOUR RETURNING MUMS THEN, DO YOU HAVE ANY FLEXITIME OR...**

***P27: We work flexible hours anyway as a company, allowing us to finish at one on a Friday, so um, that's been in place for about three or four years now. So that at least provides some flexibility for everyone and part of that is about trying to balance home and work life um. The building closes at five o'clock on a Friday and seven o'clock every evening so you can't work here overnight, you get kicked out literally at sort of that time (laughs)! Returning mums, we have no policy as such but we've got about three mums that only work part time, that's all they wanted to do since they came back. Umm one of them works, I think two of them work Monday to Thursday, so they just have the Friday off and then we've got another person that we're talking to at the moment about, although she's been back for a while, she's been back for about two years, she just, she's got quite a big manager job and she just can't balance, so she's going to be doing some sort of change to her hours. So it's very much a kind of, come and ask and we'll see what we can sort out. We haven't got any job shares at the moment. We've have that in the past and it really does depend, any anybody that applied for a job, if they applied because they wanted a job share, if we had a matching equal person, that's fine. But we don't openly sort of say, you can work three days a**

week if you wanted it, it would just be if it came up and it tends to be people that return to us that we are more flexible with. And we'd do that on sort of umm a trial period initially to see how that would work and then, like a few of the mums that we've got at the moment, assuming they'll do this for the next two or three years and then they'll go back to full time if they don't have another child and that, that's fine, we'll just see you know the state of play at the time but that's the intention.

***INT: SO YOU'RE NOT SPECIFICALLY TRYING TO ATTRACT MUMS THEN? I MEAN YOU SAID YOU WERE ADVERTISING IN THE LOCAL SCHOOLS...**

***P27: No. That's just another, we we, we almost go down a sort of rota system, so we've sort of done, you know, ethnic group this time, this time we'll try disabled, this time we'll try young people. Obviously um if a job comes um that doesn't need to start until 9.30, we'd always go for mums then because at least you can drop the kids off at school and come after that.**

***INT: YEAH. SO IT ALL SOUNDS VERY FLEXIBLE AND INFORMAL, IT'S NOT A STRICT POLICY THAT YOU HAVE TO ADHERE TO...**

***P27: No no, not at all.**

***INT: IT'S ALL UP FOR DISCUSSION.**

***P27: So some of that could be a problem. I'm just thinking about, in terms of my view and people returning to work. At the moment, all the people who have started back part time, having had maternity leave, have all been really good performers and I would think that they actually probably do as much work in five days as they would have done in four, sorry four days as they would have done in five. Uh it's kind of about choice but if they want to do the same amount of work, whatever. I think the problem might be if we had a poor performer who came back and wanted to go part time. We haven't had it yet and hopefully it won't but I don't (..) you can't, you can't say people can't go part time because they're a poor performer but I don't know if we'd be quite as flexible then, it would depend on the manager really.**

***INT: SO IT'S VERY PERFORMANCE RELATED?**

***P27:** That's kind of my personal view at the moment. That's how I think it would fail. And because we're so small, we probably only have about three people go on maternity leave a year anyway, so it's not like it's a huge issue really. The other kind of thing with that is because it's become more common with people just returning for four days, I think, I wonder if, like someone like me, I don't have children, might suddenly think, well I'd like to work four days, I kind of wonder what the response would be to that. Um, if it was because I had um a disabled parent or partner or something, that would be fine but if it was just because I fancied a jolly on a Friday then that, I don't think that would be viewed the same way at all.

***INT:** NO. NO. SO THAT COULD BE QUITE DIFFICULT THEN IF YOU HAVEN'T GOT ANYTHING WRITTEN DOWN FORMALLY.

***P27:** Yeah and a lot of it depends on the manager. Really. Because that, although HR obviously get involved, we're no sort of block policemen or anything like that, so a lot of it depends on the individual manager. Um HR normally find out about it because, you know, it's so small word gets round quickly really um but yeah, that could cause a problem.

***INT:** DOES IT GET MISUSED MUCH?

***P27:** Not really no. The informality side of it, not returning to work or anything, in the you know, if I let you just have the day off because your baby was ill but a manager in another area didn't, then that can cause some problems. And we have some kind of guidelines that only say it's the managers discretion, but just talk to a couple of other managers before you decide to see what the general rule is. But that can cause problems.

***INT:** IT'S THE CULTURE...

***P27:** ...Yeah, it's just the informal side of it that can bring problems sometimes.

***INT:** THAT TENDS TO BE A MAJOR CRITICISM OF DIVERSITY RATHER THAN A FORMAL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY, IS THAT IT BECOMES USED A SMOKESCREEN, A WHITEWASH KIND OF THING, YES WE HAVE A

DIVERSE WORK FORCE, OR WE AIM FOR DIVERSITY AND IT IGNORES THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE SYSTEMATICALLY BEING IGNORED, THAT PEOPLE AREN'T ALLOWED TO WORK PART TIME, OR THEY'RE NOT EMPLOYING THE RIGHT LEVEL, OR WHAT EVER IT MIGHT BE, BUT IT'S VERY EASY TO SAY, BUT WE'RE DIVERSE.

*P27: I mean the other side of that is that um, if if people are being sort of, not abused but misused or whatever, is we have um another support system in place, an employees assistance programme. So if someone was being treated so badly they didn't think they could come and talk to their manager or an impartial person, there is a support system there. I know it doesn't stop it happening but at least there's someone there who can say, go and do this or go and talk to them, or sue them, or whatever! So um, at least there's a support network there.

*INT: AND PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF THAT?

*P27: Yeah. I mean everyone gets that and actually about forty percent of the work force use that service. It's um, it's a mixture of sort of counselling and information seeking, so most people actually use it for information. So if you, lose your luggage on British Rail and you can't find it afterwards, they'll tell you what to write, who to write to and how to send it and advice. So um, yeah what we actually get from that side of things is um, I actually manage that service and I would never get um you know, a forty year old man phoned to ask this but I would get told that a male member of an employee's family, so I would get told that a male partner rang and the question was about childcare but I wouldn't ever be able to trace it more that. And that's purely so that we can see that, the company's spending money and we, that people are using the services.

*INT: AND DO PEOPLE?

*P27: Yeah, forty percent of of people use it. That group breaks down, most of that is actual employees and a few partners would ring.

*INT: OK, I'M JUST TRYING TO HAVE A QUICK SCAN TO SEE IF THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD ASK YOU...

***P27: ...Sorry, I'd love to say it all doesn't work and give you lot of ideas for your PhD (laughs) but most of it does most of the time!**

***INT: OH NO, NO, IT'S NICE TO HEAR. SO MUCH OF IT IS PERCEPTION, THAT'S THE PROBLEM. THAT IF YOU BELIEVE IT'S WORKING, THEN IT'S WORKING BASICALLY AND TO TRY AND FOLLOW SOMETHING UP, AGAIN, THIS KIND OF AREA IS SO DIFFICULT BECAUSE IT'S SO INTER-TWINED WITH EVERYTHING ELSE. LIKE YOU KNOW, YOU'VE GOT YOUR LIST HERE AND TO TRY AND TAKE OUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FROM EVERYTHING ELSE DOESN'T MAKE SENSE AT ALL. BUT I THINK BECAUSE OF THAT NATURE IT'S VERY EASILY BLURRED AND DISREGARDED AS WELL, SO IT'S NICE TO HEAR THAT IT DOES WORK SOMETIMES!**

***P27: I think, I think if you ask maybe uh a more sort of a negative um person in the building they might say, oh it's just the latest thing, you know, next year it will be I don't know, ethics or something um and it might be seen as like just the latest thing that happens. But having said that, most people who get involved by either going on a course, or any stage like that, actually come back and say, yeah it wasn't just a good booze up, but actually I learnt quite a bit as well. And even if it's just that, then probably, I think it's probably worth doing. It's different if they've just come back and got drunk every night but (laughs)!**

***INT: SO WHAT ARE THE CRITICISMS THAT YOU GET TO HEAR ABOUT?**

***P27: In terms of the diversity training?**

***INT: YEAH.**

***P27: Um, that people just don't believe in some areas. So for example, like I say, it tends to be sort of AIDS and um sort of gay issues that for some people it doesn't matter how often you spoke, or, the way the the the gay thing is sort of handled is that there are actually some employees from San Francisco that speak on a video about how they felt and what happened that was good in the company and what was bad in the company. Um and it's actually a bit naff because they're Americans, I, I don't mean that as bad as it sounds, but I think it'd be much better if, even if it was just a couple of Europeans**

who were on it as well, um so sometimes it's just, well, it's just an American problem, it's not really a problem here. You know um, or it's just a bit of marketing, you know which is the other sort of way it's put. So I think that can sometimes be a problem. The other, the other problem in general with the course is (..) is really sort of um, it's thinking about yourself, it's quite sort of navel gazing you know and if you take someone like a basic clerical job or a basic warehouse op, they don't want to do that. They quite enjoy the aspirations where you go out and you build bridges and you clamber over radioactive barrels and things but to sit there, and it's almost like a classroom environment, you don't do that many exercises on your own, it is quite intense and I think that's probably a criticism that is made quite a lot. I mean the company has looked into ways of maybe trying to change that but it's so difficult it's, it's just providing really a forum for discussion rather than too many exercises. I would say they were the main problems that would come back um and then a few people would say it's just the latest thing.

***INT: IS THERE QUITE A DIVIDE BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND THE REST?**

***P27:** No, we, if there's any divide I would say it's warehouse to staff (..) um not because there really is one but it's just sort of historical reasons um and like, I've worked in a few distribution companies and one of the saddest things is that, you know if sales are up it's because marketing are doing a good job, if sales are down, it's because the warehouse didn't get them out quick enough. So they never get, by a lot of people, they never get praise but they get the criticism. But you know, they only have what was given to them by someone else in the offices, that amount, so they couldn't ship them more, so it wasn't their fault, so I think that can be a little bit of an issue. We're not unionised or anything like that here because it wouldn't really fit in with the culture um but if there's any divide it would be there.

***INT: SO WOULD YOU THINK THERE'S A DIFFERENCE IN HOW THINGS ARE PERCEIVED BY THE MANAGEMENT AND BY THE STAFF IN THE WAREHOUSE?**

***P27:** Um I think there is at the moment but the reason I say at the moment is um I think I mentioned earlier on actually, there's a new warehouse being built and the

reason is this one is twenty five years old, very manual and we could just be doing things so much better, so the new warehouse is very automated. We'll move into it this time next year and people, some people will be made redundant. So um in the (..) in sort of an aspirational way, people have known this about three or four years because they've known that something's happening and the company view is if you tell them now, they have time to prepare and sort their lives out. But it also means that for some people, who have got no intention of going at all, they've had three or four years to (..) not many of them but to, not stir up trouble but to be a bit negative about things. So I think at the moment it's a little bit like that. And it's probably two people out of fifty that do that but they're quite good at it, so you know, it gets heard! I would think when we actually move, this time next year, there won't be so much of a divide at all. The reason is that the office staff, although there'll be a couple of little changes, most people's jobs stay very very similar to what they are, whereas at the moment we have to tell the warehouse ops that, wander round the building and you know, do lots of jobs, whereas in their next job they'll literally be production line, sort of from here to here, so there's a significant change for them and not for anyone else at this current time. So I think that's sort of a situation rather than anything else at the moment.

***INT: SO IT'S NOT ACTUALLY IN TERMS OF POLICY?**

***P27: No. No.**

***INT: THAT OFTEN HAPPENS AS WELL, THAT PEOPLE ARE MAKING THIS LOVELY POLICY AND THEY START OFF SORT OF GETTING IT DOWN TO THE LOWER MASSES IF YOU LIKE AND IT MIGHT HAVE STARTED OFF WITH GOOD INTENTIONS BUT THE WAY THAT IT'S RECEIVED AT THE END IS JUST LIKE, AS THE LATEST FAD AND COMPLETELY DISREGARDED. I WONDERED IF ANY OF THAT HAPPENED.**

***P27: Yeah I think that people think it's the latest fad but I think the other side of that is, that this is built into everybody's reward system, so everyone's annual and long term and salary review is based, not just on this, but that's about a quarter or a fifth of it, for the whole thing, not just diversity. So if you, if you really do feel that it's the latest fad, the chances are you're probably not performing in that area so you wouldn't get**

rewarded. There's obviously business objectives and strategic objectives and things that people have so um, in a way you're kind of forced to go along with some things. I mean obviously not, I don't know, not maybe the diversity one because that's a bit more woolly but some of the team work ones in particular that you could, sort of have to go along with really.

***INT: OK, I THINK I'LL LEAVE IT THERE THEN. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.**

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED.

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***P28:** The programme of equal opportunities historically has been very much, we've got these specific areas, identifiable areas and we will address issues within those areas. As a block. So that's how you've got gender, race, disability more and more and up and coming sexual orientation and religion to a certain degree, with a very big broad brush, descriptives that can be used to say, ah, this is a woman's problem, so therefore we'll put it in that box. Whereas it might be a PEOPLE problem. (..) You know, just because there are certain issues that will, I think there was a quote the other day that I read that said, women's issues are not specifically for women, there are some issues that are more important to women than anyone else but the issues, the actual basics of the issue, are important to everybody.

***INT:** OR SHOULD BE (LAUGHS)!

***P28:** Or should be. But if you think about it, if if if, (..) if, to take the historical thing about the glass ceiling, the progression of women within organisations. To a certain degree that has been addressed. It hasn't been successful, it's been addressed. So therefore organisations are aware that they need to develop women in a certain way and change the mindset of senior managers to an acceptance of women into that particular area of management, that has lead to certain things being done. But what hasn't been addressed is then the issue of, OK that's for women, generally but what about ethnic minority women, what about women of a certain sexual orientation, are they encountering different barriers to their progress? What about men from certain backgrounds who also have a glass ceiling? So it opens up a much broader questioning of the status quo then would at first appear with the old, what I call old-style equal opportunities. I think it was very much that, almost like a local government, this is our mantra, we will stick to this, we will have X amount in this, we will have Y amount in this and it doesn't matter about anything else because we will be seen to be doing something, regardless of the effectiveness on the organisations. And I think what's happened is the (..) it hasn't been a sea of change yet because I still think it's undergoing the sea of change within equality circles, is that diversity asks the question,

has this, have we been successful in getting where we want to? And the answer is no. I mean, it's a resounding no and everyone accepts that. More so on certain issues than others, that there is, there a degree of difference between, between issues across the board. But basically, equal opportunities in it's old style, wasn't that successful. It asked a lot of questions, it prompted a lot of debate, it prompted a lot of programmes, it listed blah blah blah but it didn't actually succeed in its objective (..) of equality.

***INT: HMM AND THAT WAS BECAUSE IT WASN'T OVERLAPPING ENOUGH?**

***P28: Lots and lots of reasons. I think there's lots and lots of reasons. It may have been that culturally there had to be a lot of barriers broken down. I think there still does. I mean outside culture has a bigger impact on organisations than some organisations would readily accept. Because what, if you think about it logically, the logical step is that we recruit a work force. Well they're not in-house, they don't, you know we haven't got a little nursery that we gradually pull our work, they come from outside. If they come from outside they come with perceptions, mindsets and their own thoughts and perceptions of what equality means, etc. etc. etc. So therefore you have to reflect society. That was one of the great things that diversity said, well look, actually we live in a diverse society, let's think about it in those terms. There's not, let's take it around, it's not about, see and then what happened was that you had this big war between equal opportunities and diversity, is it the same, is it different, is it taking over, do we feel comfortable with it, but the MY own pet theory is that equality within organisations, I'm not talking about society as a whole, but within organisations, is about management. It's not really about equality issues as such, it's about management OF issues. And that some issues are operational, pure and simple, some issues are about people, so they're people issues, which would include, are we fair and objective in our systems, are we fair and objective in the way that we recruit people, etc. now all those sorts of questions that are asked. Are we fair to particular groups within the organisation? Are there particular barriers within organisations that stop a progression at a certain point? Are there barriers that don't even allow the progression to start? You know, it's, but basically, when you're talking about organisations, you're talking about management. And it's, it is a management issue. How do you manage those issues?**

How do we manage our managers to appreciate the issue? It it it it, it builds up in that way...

***INT: ...AND HOW TO TRAIN THE TRAINERS...**

***P28: ...not, and that doesn't (..) in my view, umm lessen the importance of equality. In my view it increases the importance of equality. Because what's happening more and more in organisational management is that we're going into team based organisations, very flexible, very fast moving, even in the civil service, the teams are not as static as they were. So for team dynamics to work and be effective, you've got to look at your diversity of resources that you've got in those teams. So you're looking at what is best for certain members of the team to be doing, how do we work together, and that in itself is about, are we all equal within the team? Well the only teams that work are the teams that aren't equal. You won't get, it doesn't matter what actual function you're doing, it's whether you're considered an important, it's the respect of the individual within the team. And if you solved that, I guarantee you've solved most of your equality issues that you have control over in a team environment.**

***INT: WELL I THINK THE QUESTION THEN COMES IN, THAT IF YOU'RE DEALING AT THIS LEVEL OF DIVERSITY AND IF EVERYBODY IS BEING TREATED FAIRLY THEN YOU'VE ALREADY IGNORED OR ASSUMED A LEVEL OF EQUALITY THAT MAY NOT BE THERE.**

***P28: Within, that's what I'm saying, you can't treat it in isolation, you have to look at all you, you know, what have we got coming into the organisation. Are we being fair, a fair reflection of our society? So that, you know, yes, that does assume that certain, that certain preconditions that have already been achieved.**

***INT: SO YOU'RE TALKING WHEN YOU ALREADY HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE WORK FORCE, THEN WE CAN LOOK AT THESE?**

***P28: Yeah, I think, it's say the next stage. And to be perfectly honest, any large organisation that hasn't analysed it's recruitment procedures and selection procedures hasn't taken account of the demographics that surround in certain areas, is a long way behind and will not be around in the next millennium for very long. Because I think it's**

becoming increasingly important, certainly if you say London as an example. And certainly if you're in the retail sector, the the the association of success um between companies that are looking at at at a specific marketing area. And if you take for example, London, it's something like thirty percent of London are made up of ethnic minority, well that's huge, that's a third of your market, that's a huge chunk. If you take it nationally, it's not as important, so companies could actually survive. But if you take London as a major centre of eight million people, you've, you know, you've got to be aware of that.

***INT: SO WHAT IS IT THAT THEY'RE GAINING BY HAVING A REPRESENTATIVE WORK FORCE, FOR A LONDON BASED COMPANY?**

***P28: I mean in certain, in certain, uh it would depend on the product obviously but there's certain things that (..) if you're going to reflect society, then your work force should reflect that society. Now it doesn't have to be one for one.**

***INT: WHY THEY SHOULD THOUGH? ARE YOU TALKING A MORAL SHOULD, OR A COMPETITIVE SHOULD?**

***P28: ...There there there there is a moral, there is a moral issue somewhere along the line because if you're actually saying, 'we will not recruit', I mean basically you're moving into the area of legislative discrimination. But there are companies that will do that, they will say that. I mean, and it has been proved in the past that they operate those sorts of policies. So there's a legal obligation anyway to be fair. There's the opportunity to pick up on resources that you may not of actually perceived as being important to your company and if you're looking at the economy generally becoming more and more competitive, and more and more centralised, the difference between success and failure, or the difference between profit and loss could be innovation. If you use all the same people all the time, I will guarantee that your innovation somewhere along the line will hit a brick wall.**

***INT: SAME PEOPLE BEING AGE, SEX, RACE?**

***P28: Yeah, same background even. If you say for example you always take from the same university, well you are inheriting the mindset of that university. You know, it**

does happen. It's not very, you know, it's not a quantifiable fact but you can see the way that organisations have moulded in the past where they do have a genuine stream of flow from a particular recruitment area for example. So if you say, we've got a diverse (..) catchment area, and we want to be, we know it's, but we want to make sure that we're plugging into that. The only way that you're going to do that is to have people from those particular cultures that come in to say, oh have you thought about this, or have you thought about doing it in a different way. So it's about the difference, it's about the acceptance of difference, the use of difference to make your organisation more effective. Now if you put that in a business case, what you, what, if you, if you, funnily enough, in London, very few people recruit from their doorstep (laughs)! It's the opposite. They tend to go further afield to recruit people in. Well, you could be missing a huge local work force. And I'm saying, it's something, if it's proven that that's not right for the particular organisation, then fine, don't do it but don't make the assumption that because you haven't done it in the past, it's not going to help you be more successful in the future. And I mean that goes for all over. I think that geographically spreads wider. Um (..) it will be particularly important in race, not so much for gender because the gender is split across the country is fairly even apart from certain weird pockets like Nottingham, you know where uh uh, a one to four ratio...

***INT: (LAUGHS) STRANGE AREAS...**

***P28: Yeah well you do, it's it's it's incredible...**

***INT: CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY, TWENTY TO ONE!**

***P28: Yeah, I mean you know, it's, it's like, there are strange pockets around but I think, I think as organisations become more flexible, they have to be more flexible in their approaches. And I think in the past its been, certainly uh within certain areas and I can, uh there there, an example would be international banking, the representation of say ethnic minorities in international banking in London, was minimal ten years ago. I mean it was, it was very rare. That has changed quite a lot. There's been a, and it's not been through a (..) um a targeting, it's been by an acceptance to say, well we'll open up the way that we recruit.**

***INT: LANGUAGES I FOUND WITHIN BANKING AS WELL WERE SO IMPORTANT TO THE INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF IT.**

***P28: Well what's happened as well is that they've needed to be more creative. So therefore, I mean, well because of the the the the new synthetic products, you have to be more creative about the way that we approach our particular products.**

***INT: SO WHAT IS IT THAT THESE PEOPLE, THESE DIVERSE PEOPLE ARE BRINGING TO EXTEND THIS CREATIVITY?**

***P28: Difference. I think it's difference. It's, if you come from (..) it was, like the old accountancy thing. When you went to become a chartered accountant, they said it doesn't matter on your discipline (..) that you've actually studied, you learn how to become a chartered accountant and because you've done something different, you look at things in different ways. So if you've had for example, um let's take the civil service, you're principally concerned with recruiting arts graduates, because the majority of the work is language based. You know, English language is very much about how we draft, you know, how we push through, understanding the political context, that sort of thing. But when you say, we're going to do something different, and we want, we've got this problem (..) and how do we solve this problem? Well the old civil service, well we'll just plod along and if we ignore it long enough, it will go away because we'll get a new government and (laughs) but now it's, it's got to think, well we've got this problem and we want to consult outside. So if, number one, we're going for a consultation exercise, so we need people that there is an empathy with between the people being consulted and the actual people doing the analysis from inside. Um also, can we approach this problem in a different way? So if you're taking, say for example, people with science backgrounds, they'll look at problems in a different way, a philosophical background, they'll look at it a slightly different way. Um cultural backgrounds (..) have a different mindset about the way that I approach problems. So what you're actually doing is that you're building a flexibility with your problem solving, within your organisation. Now it's not, it doesn't happen overnight, you know. And the odd one or two people here, might not necessarily make that much difference, but what it does do is it gives you a blend and I'm very much of the belief that if you have the right mix, it's better than having a very uniform mix. So it's the right, it's the rightness of it and uh I heard a**

good quote the other day, it's not, life isn't like a melting pot, you don't want to make everything the same, it's more like salad, where you actually enjoy the differences within the actual product. So, it's, it's a very (..) it's an interesting concept in that the melting pot, you produces something that's very very uniform. With the salad it can be very very different, different types of salad, different ingredients in the salad, it's still salad! So you know, that that's, I think that's a very good way of understanding how difference can make something better. And it's not that, and it's not about having targets. It's not about saying we will have a quota, we, you know, we want to have X amount of people from this particular background in our organisation. What it's saying is we want the best people in our organisation. And that is paramount. In in in, it's, even within equality you have to have the best people. It's making sure that everything you do to get the best people is fair and objective. And choose the best people because they are the best at that particular skill.

***INT: SO ON A MERITOCRATIC BASIS.**

***P28: It, it, it has to be um and therefore you have to be very open to where you get those people from. I think if you just stream into the same thing all the time, it's like saying, oh we are, we'll only ever recruit graduates (..) well fine, yeah OK (..) but (..)**

***INT: WHY!**

***P28: Yeah but why do we do that? That way it's very expensive because they expect to be paid well, what about the people who can actually learn whilst they're progressing on an organisation? Um what about if we want to bring other, you know a specialist and then what about if we want to recruit at a higher level? So it, it gradually builds up and I think it it it's the changing nature of organisations that's actually making equality more successful. I think you know, senior managers have realised that flexibility is the name of the game, you know, the old style, oh we'll have a very despotic, clear hierarchy that will not change regardless and you know, very very narrow definitions of responsibility. I mean empowerment, you know the whole concept of empowerment blew that one out the water! I mean you know, if you've got empowerment, you've got true delegation and you delegate your responsibility (..) and they sink or swim because you're actually saying, you are now responsible for this piece of work.**

***INT: SO YOU THINK IT'S THAT WAY ROUND THEN, THAT ORGANISATIONS ARE JUST CHANGING AS A MATTER OF WHAT, CURRENT CLIMATE, OUTSIDE OR WORK OR?**

***P28: I think it it it's, it's a multi-pronged attack on organisations, if that's, if that is a word. I think equality is a very visible part of it. Purely and simply because there are interest groups that make their issues known and there is, obviously there is legislation in place that makes it important. There is (..) I think the difference is that whereas twenty years ago, it was very much, we've got legislation so we have to do it, nowadays it's (..) I think it's what you know, your thesis is looking at, is why should we do it? Is there an economic business case for taking up particular policies and implementing them within an organisation? Because they are important to us as an organisation, our success or failure. And I think that's where the winners come. I think the acceptance of that at boardroom level (..) not totally but and and it's not always quantifiable as a business case because there are other reasons why you should be doing things but I mean, you know at the end of the day, equality is about increased efficiency.**

***INT: SO HAVE YOU SEEN THAT, SEEN THAT COME INTO PRACTICE THEN? HAVE YOU SEEN ORGANISATIONS REALISE THAT THIS IS WHAT THEY OUGHT TO BE DOING BECAUSE IT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THEM ECONOMICALLY?**

***P28: I certainly, it's certainly happened within this organisation and we work from a different point of view, we don't work to bottom line. And that's one of the strange differences that people have a little bit of difficulty in grasping between the public and private sector. Private sector is beholden to its shareholders. If they make money, they can do things. Simply, you know it's very easy to take up an initiative in the private sector, if if if, if it can be shown that it could equate to increased profits, it will be grasped, very very readily. In the public sector, it's very different. There is, there are different arguments. Take for us, our organisation for example. We are an organisation that has the lead, you know legislative responsibility in certain areas. So therefore that would entail that we should be seen to be doing things...**

***INT: ...SETTING THE STANDARD.**

*P28: ...in the vanguard, exactly, of those particular things. So it's not necessarily a business argument. It would, it's a business argument because it IS our business so therefore we should reflect what our business is but it's not necessarily an economic argument. But that economic bit might come second um so therefore we would look at the policies that say (..) will help us to strive for equality. Not necessarily from how much does it cost.

*INT: SO EQUALITY IS YOUR AIM RATHER THAN ECONOMICS?

*P28: Yeah. Um I think certain organisations in the private sector, there's a balance between the two and some will always look at the economic factors as a paramount importance and then the rest follow. I mean um (..)

*INT: WHAT WILL BE THE DRIVING MOTIVATION FOR MORE ORGANISATIONS TO TAKE UP NEW EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OR DIVERSITY OR A FAIRNESS STRUCTURE?

*P28: I think it's an acceptance that (..) just because success, historical success has happened, with a certain type of, of way of working, of work force, etc. doesn't necessarily equate to the future. And I think organisations need to look to the future, look at their future planning, look at their internal demographics. Are the ways that we're working going to be successful over the next ten to twenty years? What outside influences will impact upon us as an organisation that could affect our profitability? If that's equality, then you know, and that's one strand of it, I mean it could be increased competition and a global market. You know, there's lots of different ones but I think if the planners within those organisations pick up on those threads, it gives equality another impetus within organisations. And that's what we're talking about. Equality as an issue is never going to go away. I guarantee, even in a hundred years time there will be people discussing how we make things more equal. Because we're not equal. We develop at different rates. We have different perceptions about the way that we work. We have different perceptions about how we want to be treated. And they will always be there. Human beings, we're not going to end up with a uh a uniform human being and we don't want to, because that's what I think is the celebration of difference.

***INT: HENCE THE DIVERSITY STRAND.**

***P28: It's important. And it think it's important that uh, there is a drive within organisations for it as well. What's tending to happen is that if there isn't a commitment from the very very top, a visible, ongoing, living the values of equality type commitment (..)**

***INT: HOW DO YOU DEMONSTRATE THAT THOUGH?**

***P28: There's lots, I mean, it it it's difficult. It's not easy. But, it's, if, well we'll use my organisation as an example. We have an annual staff survey and within that staff survey there are questions of equality. So there will be questions of, 'do you think your director, the director' we have a directorate structure, so 'do you think your director is committed to equal opportunities?' well that will give you quantifiable, and then we'll have that going down the hierarchical levels. That will give some quantifiable analysis to say, well are they, you know, is there a perception that they're doing it? The way they can do it is we have an annual equal opportunities conference (..) directors attend that conference. They are asked questions in the plenary session, directly. So therefore there is challenge. There has to be challenge.**

***INT: AND IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS PROCESS GOES ON?**

***P28: That report will go to every single member in the organisation. Uh so that's one example, is that if you have a, either a forum or fora, where directors can be challenged about their uh conduct over the last twelve months, then that's very, they have to sign up to things. We have four advisory groups that cover specific areas um, basically race, disability, gender and sexual orientation. Each of those advisory groups have a board member as a sponsor, who is their direct link of communication between the issues that come to that advisory group and to the actual board. That's, so those four directors are actually demonstrating their commitment to equal opportunities, number one by being a sponsor but number two by acting as the mouthpiece for that advisory group. Um actions, our chief executive is having a phone in today. He will be, he had briefing on the equality issues, he expects to be asked questions directly, in a very confidential**

manner, about equality issues in, within the organisation. I mean that shows commitment. Honest and open debate shows commitment. Um one area we (..)

***INT: IT ALL SOUNDS VERY EXPENSIVE.**

***P28: It's very cheap. It's very very cheap! They're not expensive, I mean, the conferences are not cheap but then we feel that there's a very important need to have an annual conference that keeps having issues that that are coming up on equality, on an annual basis. We may even go to six monthly conferences (..) on a smaller scale. Um.**

***INT: BUT THE OTHER MEASURES DON'T COST MONEY, IT'S TIME AND EFFORT?**

***P28: It's time, it's, that's what, that's what it boils down to. It's the diversion of very senior managers' time. But in in effect, the rewards of that could be immense.**

***INT: WHAT ARE THE REWARDS, TELL ME?**

***P28: The rewards can be, that you have a happier workforce, number one. Happier workforce equates a more, a more effective workforce. An unhappy workforce, low morale, low esteem, think that they've got no respect, guarantee that you'll have increased sick leave, that you'll have increased problems at I.T., that you'll have increased disputes. Your grievances will go up. There will be an undercurrent of, 'why should we work for this organisation, I only, I only come here to get paid', so therefore, the the the kudos that can be gained by overt, and it has to be overt, indirect doesn't work in this, it has to be overt, makes people happier about their situation. The cost benefits of that is that you most probably find that sickness leave goes down and that you're not, you're not having expensive I.T. cases. I mean I'm not saying you'll remove I.T. cases, what I'm saying is well, the (..) way that the that the problems can be handled will most probably be held at a much lower level and won't end up at I.T., given that all your procedures are in place to allow that to happen as well. I mean, you, you can't get away from the procedural points of equality. There must be processes in place that allow staff to, number one, disagree and take things further because otherwise you just do get problems. I mean the problem that is there, at an informal stage, will most probably be solved at the informal stage. The problems that are not aired at**

informal stages tend to go to the formal stage and end up at a very high level before resolution happens. Um I mean, it, I, the only problem with commitment from the top that we are now going into an area of, and we might, we might be a little bit more advanced than some organisations as regard equality although we consider ourselves not an equal opportunities employer, funnily enough. We start from that premise. Even though the vast majority of employees in the staff survey DO think we're an equal opportunities employer. I mean it's about three-quarters I think, off the top of my head. It's quite a high number when you think that that, the response rate of the survey is about eighty odd percent, so you've got a very small number that disagree. We're moving into an area where we think that accountability is becoming more important than actual demonstration of commitment.

***INT: SO THESE BENEFITS REALLY DO WORK THEN?**

***P28:** I think we've proven that they do. That (..) if you can say that (..) there, we have identified pockets where there is resistance. For example we have a, just, take a back step, the organisation structure is that we have a chief executive and secretary, a board of directors who are responsible for different directorates. In that directorate structure there are divisions. There has been a year on year identification that the divisional managers are not committed one hundred percent to equal opportunities. So we're seeing a blockage, um and that's why we're looking at accountability to maybe unblock that particular area. What's happening is that fifty percent of staff year on year do not think their divisional manager is committed to equal opportunities.

***INT: THAT'S QUITE HIGH.**

***P28:** It's very high. And that's why we're addressing the problem.

***INT: SO WHAT IS THE RESISTANCE AT THE LINE MANAGER LEVEL THEN?
WHAT IS THEIR PROBLEM WITH IT?**

***P28:** I think it's polyglot. Uh what's happening is that divisional managers by their position tend to be (..) of certain ages. They are (..) predominantly male. Um most probably uh eighty percent. They are (..) well I would say one hundred percent university educated. They haven't necessarily had, they've most probably been on fast-

track schemes to get where they've got to um. Their way of working is steeped in historical methods.

***INT: AND THEY EXPECT EVERYONE ELSE TO WORK TO THOSE...**

***P28: Yeah. Their progression has been because of their effectiveness of working in that particular way. So therefore what I think has happened is that there's been a certain degree of why should I have to worry about this, I've never had to, it hasn't affected my career. To total ignorance of equal opportunities issues. I think that's the spectrum. Um what we're looking at is ways to change the mindset of those particular managers to an acceptance that equality is important. Um we also want to look at...**

***INT: ...SO THAT'S QUITE BIG THEN, YOU'RE NOT EVEN JUST TRYING TO CHANGE THEIR WORK BEHAVIOURS, YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING FOR THEIR MINDSET AS WELL?**

***P28: I think so because if you, work behaviours, I mean (..) that to me just smacks of lip service. We want to change actual behaviours, so that if you're in a pressure situation, if you change work behaviours (..) ninety-nine percent of the time everything will be fine, hunky-dory. When the pressure's on, you get that one percent and it reverts. You can do (..) untold amount of damage with just a particular incidence because what happens is everyone remembers the bad things. The other ninety-nine percent of the time when everything was going great is forgotten about that, it, it's completely blown away. So I think you do have to change, you don't, they don't have to accept it totally, not indoc, it's not an indoctrination process. What it is is changing their perceptions. And I think if, perceptions are not necessarily about work behaviour. They're about individuals.**

***INT: SO HOW WOULD YOU CHANGE ONE OF THESE MANAGER'S PERCEPTIONS?**

***P28: This is where we're looking at. We're looking at accountability as one particular avenue. (..)**

***INT: SO YOU'RE FORCING THEM TO BEHAVE IN A CERTAIN WAY?**

***P28:** Not necessarily forcing them but to, certainly to take up (..) equality objectives within their working life. And if they don't, they're answerable to their director. We think at the moment, and I say we think because we don't actually know, that there is, although the board are very very committed openly, when it gets behind closed doors and they're discussing, you know, the performance of their divisional managers, we think that equal opportunities isn't very high on their agenda! (laughs) so therefore, yeah, I mean, you know, but IF we can tap into that, we can exert the right pressure to say, actually, you should think about these things and the way that you should do it, I mean we've done a lot of work on putting guidance out on how you can set equal opportunities objectives in business plans. You don't necessarily have to have a stand alone objective but it's like addressing development as an issue, making development open to all staff. Very simple. And you can actually, if you really wanted to quantify although we don't want to get into measuring things because that becomes very onerous for the line managers because they have to, I mean we have to all the ethnic checking and all this sort of thing. What we want to do is get the perception that everyone should be entitled to it. Flexible working. We want to say in you know, when a vacancy becomes (..) on-line, is that a full-time vacancy? Why is it a full-time vacancy? Look at the job design. Can it be done by a part-timer, can it be done on a job share? Ask these questions. And that shows a lot of commitment. You know, if you can get in a division when they actually do, where there's a vacancy filling exercise, they will ask that question up front. That's the biggest commitment you can get to equality. I mean you know they're asking the questions up front about it.

***INT:** SO IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A BIG, YOU'VE GOT PEOPLE ON THE SHOP FLOOR IF YOU LIKE WHO ARE SEEING IT BEING (..) WORKED AROUND THEM, THEY'RE SEEING IT IN ACTION, THEY'RE SEEING THESE, WELL HEARING THESE WORDS GOING AROUND, AND AT THE VERY TOP YOU'VE GOT PEOPLE WHO ARE COMMITTED TO IT OSTENSIBLY AND...

***P28:** ...Yeah, it's the middle layer.

***INT:** AND AT THE MIDDLE LAYER YOU JUST...

***P28:** We reckon that it's like, if you take, if you look at it as a cake, your top slice is great. Your bottom slice is generally working very very well but there's a filling that's getting a bit too you know, it's a bit hard.

***INT:** AND THAT'S WHERE IT FALLS DOWN?

***P28:** Yeah.

***INT:** PEOPLE DON'T WANT IT?

***P28:** Not totally. Because if you say it's fifty percent, well fifty percent are alright and fifty percent are not. So it's only, but what we want to do is get into those fifty. We want to, we because of our situation want to be an exemplar (..) equal opportunities employer, not just in equal opportunities but an exemplar in the field. We know we're nowhere near that.

***INT:** IS THAT WHY YOU DON'T CALL YOURSELVES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYERS THEN?

***P28:** We do. I mean we will say, we are, you know, we are, we will promulgate that we are an equal opportunities employer INTERNALLY. Especially, we are very self-critical, in fact too self-critical because there was an analysis done on the staff survey with comparators outside and in the vast majority of cases we actually finish in the the the top quarter – half, so you know, we're not (laughs) we're, we we tend to be very self-critical.

***INT:** WELL THAT'S ANOTHER ISSUE THAT I'M STARTING TO LOOK AT NOW BECAUSE THE MOMENT YOU START TO RAISE AWARENESS, OK, YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT, SO YOU SHOULD BE RATED HIGHER BUT THEN AGAIN, IT'S NOT BECAUSE IF YOU ASK PEOPLE INTERNALLY, THEY'D RATE WITH RAISED EXPECTATION AS WELL, BY RAISING STANDARDS.

***P28:** That's right. I think once you get, I mean once you get into the field of equality, you have to accept, once you've put policy in place (..) for a certain amount of time, you'll have more problems than you did before.

***INT: YES.**

***P28: Because number one, you open up the debate. We (..) a year ago, started putting harassment and bullying questions in the staff attitude survey and of course the incidents of it went off the scale. People were saying, oh we didn't know we had such a big problem! But it gives the opportunity, it gives people the opportunity to SAY that. Um so what we've done, we normally set, well I'll take a step back and we'll talk about policy for a moment, not the practical side of it because I think it's important to know where we are. We implemented an equal opportunities strategy, which has got a very over-arching document that will take us forward. From that we had priority areas. We've pretty much old school, gender, blah blah blah, gender, flexible working, race, disability. What we've, we worked through that and we've now got to the stage where we've only got one priority. That one priority is that we will not, we will not allow any discrimination of any staff within this organisation. A much broader brush but we had to go through the stage of identification of specific issues to move to a stage where you actually say, equality concerns everybody.**

***INT: YEAH. BUT YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE ISSUES WERE UNTIL THEN?**

***P28: Well, we knew, we had a good idea but I think that certain issues had to be addressed. Because I think if you go, say straight for the non-discriminatory (..) priority, people generally would say, we've got no concept of what we're actually talking about here.**

***INT: YEAH, WHICH IS THE CHARGE AGAINST FORMAL DIVERSITY.**

***P28: You need to build those building blocks in place and there's lots of, people have got lots and lots of issues. I mean it ranges from childcare facilities. I mean when you move into childcare you move into elder care and then you move into flexible working and then, you know, you've got, race is still a big issue, uh promotion, development umm another big one is how people perceive the actual processes to work. They feel that it's not fair to them, but is that because of the way that they were told, or the actual process? Is it a personal feeling or is it a procedural thing? So what we've done is**

we've looked very, we've we've concentrated on the processes first of all because if you don't (..) you could have inherent failings within your, it doesn't matter what equality programmes and how or where you are at implementing them, you're barely, you're building in failure. Because if your recruitment system for example is flawed, you're going to, you're not going to be an equal opportunities employer.

***INT:** WELL I HAD THAT FROM UMM AN INNER LONDON BOROUGH, I SPOKE TO AN EQUALITY OFFICER THERE, WHO SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THEY NOW HAD A REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE, AND THEY'D HAD TWENTY YEARS OF, THEY'D ACHIEVED IT THROUGH POSITIVE ACTION AND TARGETS BASICALLY, AND THE MIX OF PEOPLE THAT THEY HAD HADN'T, THEY'D BEEN RECRUITED FOR NUMBERS A LOT OF TIMES, OR IF THEY HADN'T, ONCE THEY CAME TO THIS MIX THEY WERE SO FEARFUL OF BEING TAKEN DOWN A DISCIPLINARY ROUTE THAT NOBODY (..) NOBODY WORKED TO THE UTMOST, IT HAD JUST LOST THE WHOLE ETHOS BECAUSE EVERYBODY WAS SO INTENT ON PUTTING THIS POLICY INTO ACTION.

***P28:** and I think that's, that is a particular Local Authority problem. They have become equal, striving for equality! (laughs) because what happens is, you almost become, it's like having a protected species; 'oh you can't possible discipline that person because' even though they did the most terrible things. And that's just ridiculous. That's not, that's not equality. What we're striving for is ALL staff being treated in the same way. And we are emphasising the all. We want from the very top to the very bottom, regardless of background, regardless of gender, regardless of all the labels, to be, have an environment, a working environment that is fair and equal.

***INT:** AND THAT'S HOW YOU WORD IT IN YOUR POLICY IS IT?

***P28:** Well actually the priority is ALL staff. And that is, that is an emphasis that we're, and it would give example (..) of you know of, how discrimination, you know, discriminated on the grounds of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, you know, we spell it out but we are very much concerned that we treat all our employees the same. That all the employees have the same opportunities (..) given you

know, going back to the fact that it will be on merit, that you, you are chosen because you are the most suitable candidate. If you happen to be disabled, fine, there won't be a problem with that.

***INT: YEAH BUT WE'RE LOOKING AT YOUR WORK.**

***P28:** That's right and what we've done as well is we've moved to a competency based filling system. So experiences from outside the work environment can come into that as well. For example, if you're director of a charitable organisation outside, you could be just an administrative person but that gives you extra levels of skills that you may not have necessarily had the opportunity to demonstrate within the organisation but if you're going for a post that says you need to have, uh a competency of managing people, well if you're a director of something I can guarantee you've got a pretty good idea of how to manage people, so you know. And that opens it out because a lot of people don't only uh demonstrate competencies within work, you know, we have a life outside work. And that, that brings that into account. I think that's very important as well. You know, the acceptance of an organisation that employees come here to work. We spend a lot of time at work but it's not our life, well it shouldn't be our life.

***INT: WE HOPE IT'S NOT THE TOTAL! (LAUGHS)**

***P28:** Well, you make sure it's not! But I mean but give people the opportunity to say it's not so therefore that you know, when you're looking at (..)...

***INT... WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO THAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO TRANSFER HERE?**

***P28:** Exactly. On our performance management system there is a stage where you need to do a formal job plan. So it's a very practical way of bringing that in. We'll look at your work objectives first of all. And that, you know, that, that's the most important thing because we're here to provide a resource to fulfil...

***INT:...IS THAT PART OF YOUR APPRAISAL SYSTEM, DID YOU SAY?**

***P28:** Yeah, yeah. So the objectives will be set where you're measured against. Fine no problem. The next part of it is the development plan. And that isn't only about work

development, that is about personal development. So if there is opportunities to develop personally outside the sphere of the organisation, take them up, discuss them.

***INT: YEAH AND IS THAT BEING VIEWED AS WELL FROM THE TOP OR DO YOU THINK THAT PEOPLE ARE AWARE THAT IF THEY TOOK MORE FROM EACH EMPLOYEE IF YOU LIKE THAT THEY'RE ADDING VALUE TO THEIR ORGANISATION? IS THERE THAT KIND OF FEELING?**

***P28: I think so. I I would hope so. Um maybe it needs to be promulgated and strengthened, I think that's true but (..) I was talking to a director not long ago and he said when he goes into his performance management discussion with the permanent secretary, they don't only talk about work, he's involved with charities outside, so there would be discussion about his involvement with those charities outside. If it's happening at their level, why can't it happen further down the line? There will be a resource obligation. Obviously, if every single administrative person wanted to do an MBA we might have a problem funding that.**

***INT: BUT THE LIKELIHOOD IS (..)**

***P28: The likelihood is that the development of staff won't actually be that expensive, at certain levels. It may be just someone saying I've always wanted to do a GCSE in English because I've never had the opportunity before and I've got all these (inaud) exams. And I can talk of this personally because I've actually gone through this with a a colleague that I was line-managing at the time. What do you think you need to do, extra, outside of work, to make you more promotable? And they said well actually, I've got these these these knowledge and skills gaps. I said, well we can't actually fill those internally, can we, so therefore what can we do? Or, I'll go away and look at what courses are available, come back and have another discussion and then see which is the most appropriate. And we got it fully funded. I mean it wasn't that expensive. It meant, it meant commitment on the part of the employee because they had to do it after work. So it was two nights a week. Um and this was a member of staff that had two children, both at primary school, that obviously, you know has got a home life as well, but their commitment was backed up by the organisational commitment to push it through so they could actually do it. That person has since been promoted. (..) You**

know and it took a lot time for them to get their promotion but there was, that was a crucial discussion in their promotability.

***INT: SO THAT'S A, REDUCING YOUR ATTRITION LEVELS BASICALLY, IF YOU'RE INVESTING IN PEOPLE.**

***P28: That's part of it. I mean, one of the failings, uh, being the organisation that's set up Investors in People UK, we made a big mistake, we didn't include equal opportunities in the IIP. It's (..) assumptions but it's not a specific objective.**

***INT: SO WHEN YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT OLD, OLD EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EARLIER ON, ARE YOU SAYING NOW THAT DIVERSITY, REALLY INVESTING IN PEOPLE IS THE NEW EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES?**

***P28: I think it's, no. It's a new approach. I don't, you shouldn't just cut off from the past. The past was very useful for very very good things. Uh, it brought to the fore very big issues. Very (..) invisible issues in some cases and it was a great way of getting discussion and acceptance that equality is an issue. That shouldn't be dismissed and it shouldn't just be swept away. It's (..) the approach is slightly different in that some people are very comfortable with putting categorisation into place and and and they can't grab the concept of diversity because they just think it's a management tool to say that we won't have anything to do with equal opportunities. That's one of the excuses that I've heard. Well actually it's not because diversity is much more difficult to manage than straightforward categorised equal opportunities. What I would say is (..) there's a synergy that needs to be brought in. That the old style needs to be more accepted of the new style. The new style has to be more accepting of the old...**

***INT: ...TO INTEGRATE THE TWO APPROACHES?**

***P28: Exactly. It's it's getting it together to say, what, and you can pick and choose! You don't have to say, oh we'll follow this mantra and we're not going to diverge off and do U-turns and, we'll just say, what is most practicable for our organisation. So you have to know your culture of your organisation.**

***INT: SEE THAT'S THE THING. THE PROBLEM THAT I'M COMING UP ACROSS NOW IS THAT DIVERSITY, WHILE IT DOES ENCOMPASS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL, IT'S QUITE EASY, IT'S HARD TO MANAGE BUT IT'S EASY TO ACCEPT. IT'S EASY TO SELL BUT THEN IT ACTUALLY REQUIRES SUCH A MASSIVE CHANGE OF AN ORGANISATION'S CULTURE AND STRUCTURE THAT IT'S A LOT MORE DIFFICULT THAN STANDARD EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES. AND EQUALLY, EMPLOYERS CAN SAY WE ARE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYERS JUST BY PUTTING IN SOMETHING THAT YOU TICK A BOX AND THAT'S IT...**

***P28:...I agree totally. What you're saying is that, it's most probably more difficult because it's more effective (laughs)! If you've got, you've got a longer running.**

***INT: YEAH. THAT MEANS A COMMITMENT TO A LONG TERM PROGRAMME OF INTEGRATION.**

***P28: Exactly. You, you've, that's right and what, that's another area where we've gone. We've gone very much for mainstreaming equal opportunities. We very much want to put it in the line because (..) my argument is, we have over four thousand employees. Every single one of those people has to be practising equal opportunities, to be successful.**

***INT: DO YOU TRAIN THEM?**

***P28: We are looking at, we are looking at that. We don't have mandatory equal opportunities training. What we're trying to do, and it's taking quite a long time, is to integrate equal opportunities into all sorts of training, so that, and and, in our policy work, i.e. setting the government agenda, there is now a stage that it goes through in the in the inception of policy where equal opportunity issues are considered, at the very very earliest stage. What impact will this policy have on (..) so, looking at it that way. To get back to the managing diversity, actually managers should be able to manage diversity. (..) Managers manage people.**

***INT: WELL TO MY MIND, IF YOU'RE A GOOD MANAGER, THEN YOU'RE DOING IT ALREADY.**

***P28:** That's right but managers have to be trained. Managers are not born. Managers develop as much as a a a normal employee would develop, managers have to develop. You have to give them the support mechanisms. You should, there is necessary training, that has to go, be gone through. There is the the, British Telecom for example, umm to support what I'm thinking about, they had in their engineering section, they were getting a lot of I.T. cases on race and racial abuse and racial discrimination. So what they said was well, this diversity, managing diversity seems a good concept, so what we'll do is we'll set up a workshop for our, and there was about four thousand managers plus, to attend, to get these issues out into the open and to give our managers the opportunity to understand what it's about. And that's what they did. And they got a hundred percent attendance rate, mind you, well through whatever means but they actually got is, it was voluntary in inverted commas but uh, and it's proved very successful. Their incidence of I.T. cases has gone down. Managers are much more understanding. Managers are more able to challenge bad behaviour. And that's one of the things that you gain: if you're putting challengers into the system, which you know, you're saying to individuals you can challenge, managers have also got to be able to identify where problem areas are potentially going to occur, or challenge inappropriate behaviour when it happens. If they're not skilled in that, how could you expect them to do it?

***INT:** WELL THAT'S WHY I ASKED IF YOU HAD ANY SORT OF OTHER TRAINING.

***P28:** We are looking at, we are, we are looking at various ways of doing it. One thing we have been using recently is theatre workshops, to get issues out in the open in a very upfront, practical way, i.e. you have actors that (tape runs out)

(new tape commences) discuss issues and solutions to those issues and to understand that their behaviour has an impact on others. I think that's a crucial stage, is that people must understand that what we do affects other people in work, as it might in the outside world, and I think one stage that um I'm certainly looking at with uh in the team environment, is that I think that people need to have a certain understanding of how they actually act (..) because the way we think of ourselves is very different from the way we're perceived by others. If you don't understand, we all go off the handle,

everyone at some stage will get annoyed, in it's (..) most euphemistic term, but it's how we handle that. If there, are situations where we will shout at people but it's how you handle that afterwards. It's saying, yes I understand that and I reacted in this way because. And you tell the other party that's what it was about. It's not about recrimination, it's not about blame, it's about controlled analysis after the event because there will be situations where you can be in a very very highly pressurised situation, we are not saints.

***INT: THAT TAKES A LOT OF SKILL AND PRACTICE...**

***P28:...**It takes a huge amount, oh yeah, that's what it's about. That is ongoing. I think that, that you know, you don't say, oh we're going to have one little two-day course that's going to solve all these problems, throughout a manager's developmental side of his career, there will need to be reviews of that, there will need to be re-addressing a bit and also for staff, assertiveness training. You know, if if staff aren't assertive, and that doesn't mean aggressive or you know you get bullying up the hierarchy as well as down, it's to say, you know, I have got a problem and I want to discuss it.

***INT: YEAH. YOU'RE NOT AT ANY POINT SAYING WHAT IS APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR FOR YOUR STAFF THEN?**

***P28:** No. We are not set, we are set, there are certain guidelines (..) and the certain guidelines are in the staff handbook I mean like you know you, you (..) you shouldn't swear at staff you know, you shouldn't, if you are annoyed, there shouldn't be a racial overtone to it, there shouldn't be a gender. It's, 'oh no why have you done this?' well OK, I mean (..) it's fine, I mean you know it's because you know a minister has just phoned up and said that if this isn't here, your job's on the line and blah blah blah, and I've got four thousand different things to do and you know it, oh I've got to go and pick the kids up from school and (..)

***INT: PRESSURE!**

***P28:** Exactly. Now some people at some times are very good at handling that pressure. Um we do get annoyed and there has to be acceptance on both sides that staff get

annoyed, managers get annoyed. It's how the situation is handled. The the moment of explosion as it were will happen.

***INT: AND EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT THESE EXPLOSIONS CAN'T BE ON THE BASIS OF (..)**

***P28: Exactly. It's because of the work. It's because of the individuals necessarily.**

***INT: BUT DO PEOPLE KNOW THAT BECAUSE OF THE CULTURE AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANISATION?**

***P28: I think it's it's it's it's it's something that we're working on. I think there's lots of, we're definitely trying to move from a blame culture for example. I think um because we've been in a downsizing situation, that there is increased responsibility on more junior members of staff. Work pressure has increased because, but there's been an acceptance lower down the hierarchy that everybody is affected by it. Um the increased use of team work has helped. It's not, it's nowhere near perfect. I think that that we've got problems with who gets responsibility and terms. You know, if, is delegation being handled in the right way? Uh is everybody getting a fair crack of the whip to show their worth, as it were? There there's lots of work I think to be done on team dynamics within the organisation. We've started I mean we've, we're doing some TMS stuff, there's been a whole project of that within the organisation. Um it's looking at (..) the positives and negatives of individuals in the team. I mean one pet thing that I've got is that there should be regular team meetings. And not only about the actual work, there is an open agenda that says, what problems have got, let's discuss our problems. Everyone should have equal input into the decision making process, where appropriate. Not always can you know, the most junior member of staff say, oh by the way I think you should get rid of those twenty people over there, it's not appropriate but there is, oh we've got this piece of work to do um I would like to consult the team about how best, well if someone comes up with a good idea, use it. Give, but give them the opportunity to come up with an idea. What tends, has tended...**

***INT: ...YEAH AND FOR THEM TO SAY THAT IT'S THEIRS AS WELL RATHER THAN HANDING OVER.**

***P28:** It, but if it's a good team environment it doesn't matter where it comes from.

***INT:** YEAH.

***P28:** Sure you can reward that (..) by later on saying, you know, that was a brilliant idea, you know, I'm really pleased you came up with it and it's really really helped, you know, it's been wonderful. And people love being thanked! I mean people love being you know, their ego being stroked, it's a great managerial tool. So I think, you know, those are, to get equality, those lower levels of working are so important. The way we work together.

***INT:** WELL THAT'S WHAT I'M HEARING YOU SEE BECAUSE IF YOU'VE GOT ALL YOUR MANAGERS AT THE TOP, THEY'RE DOING IT, THEY'RE COMMITTED. THEN THE ONES IN THE MIDDLE, THEY'RE FIFTY-FIFTY AND THEN AT THE BOTTOM LEVEL, THEY MIGHT SEE THESE THINGS GOING ON AROUND THEM BUT THEY MIGHT BE COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT TO WHAT THEIR DAY TO DAY EXISTENCE IS BECAUSE YOU'VE, THERE'S BEEN NO TRAINING OF (..) HOW TO HAVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU. IF YOU DON'T KNOW THEIR CULTURE, IF YOU DON'T KNOW THEIR DIFFERENCE, IF YOU DON'T, YOU KNOW, IF YOU'RE TOO SCARED TO ASK QUESTIONS, OR TO DEAL APPROPRIATELY WITH THEM, THEN IT MATTERS NOTHING WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE TOP.

***P28:** That's right and that's what we've put out in guidance to management. Because I, I mean, I am a strong believer if you're a manager of a team, you've got to know your team! You know, it's not, (..) it's not difficult. I mean that that, you don't have to train people to do that. I mean it's about (..) well, I'll take a step back. Having been through that sort of training indirectly, i.e. what, one of our pet concerns is that we haven't got enough skilled interviewers. And we are going to concentrate on getting people skilled up on interview techniques. If you're a skilled interviewer (..) you know what questions to ask, you know the way to frame a question, you know how to draw out information from people. So it's not directly about, you know, this is how you get on with your team. It's by having the skill of interviewing techniques that will impact upon your

management style. And it's, you know, it's a, it's simple about you know, when you've got a new member of staff. Take it, let's take it away from work; you're in a social environment, you see someone you want to talk to. You ask them questions to find out information about them because you want to get to know them better. What's the difference between having a member of staff (..)

***INT: YEAH.**

***P28:** It's different, it's a different situation and you'll ask different questions but there are certain questions that you'd ask: are you married, you know, do you have any children, I mean, so already you're building up. You know obviously got children, you put that away, school holidays are going to be a problem. You know it's, is illness going to be a problem, how do we address though how do we address it best that doesn't impact upon the team. How do we address it best for the individual, you know and that's where the flexibility of management comes in. So you already know that information, that it's not a shock when it happens. When the, when the person does phone up and say, 'oh my son's really ill, you know it's totally unexpected, I need a day off today' you don't say, 'get into work, oh oh oh you know we've got all this work to do' what you say 'sorry to hear about that, you know we'll, take as much time as you need, keep me informed about the situation' (..)

***INT: ...AND YOU'VE ALREADY THOUGHT THAT THIS MIGHT BE A POSSIBILITY.**

***P28:** Exactly and the rest of the team most probably know that there's this, as long as it doesn't happen every week. I mean, you know that's the other extreme but that flexibility actually will build a stronger team.

***INT: SO WHERE DOES INVESTING IN PEOPLE FIT INTO ALL OF THIS?**

***P28:** Investing in people should open up managers self-analysis and people's self-analysis – how much do we know about the organisation, how much do we know about how we can be developed. You know all those sort, all the elements of um IIP, which is basically very much a knowledge exercise. I mean at the end of the day it's a knowledge. No-one comes round and says and stands over your shoulder and says, 'oh

yeah, you're doing, you're a real investor because you're living every day of the week! Forget that! It's a game! It's, it's a game. It's a success or failure game. But what it should do, it should implant into the organisation good practice, good concept. You know development of staff IS important. That staff know the context that they're working in IS important. The valuing of people IS, you know...

***INT: ...SO IT'S INTEGRATING THAT WITH DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES?**

***P28:** Yeah, that's right and I mean, that's right, it's the whole package. IIP as a stand alone I mean to be perfectly honest, all the people in the organisation that are actually working on the assessment, think it's the biggest pain ever. Because it's a HUGE amount of work. You have to provide evidence, you know, you have to have interviews, you have to, where are all the training and development plans. All that sort of thing, it's very time consuming but the good thing is that there are very good concepts within that. And that again is another piece of the jigsaw (..) it's, it gets back to an organisation saying this is what we want to achieve and we're going to, how we're going to achieve it is by this. And you put in all the implements. A stand alone policy is not going to be the answer. It's about how we work. Do we work effectively? If that means having a study on you know, working patterns and working techniques, you need to do it. You can't just sit at the top and go, oh we're going to do this regardless. You know, you need to know what your problems are. So if you know what the problems are you've got half a chance of getting the solutions right. I think the practice (..) is tough.

***INT: DO YOU IMAGINE THIS WOULD BE THE SAME STORY IF YOU WERE SITTING NOT FOR A PUBLIC BUT FOR A PRIVATE COMPANY WHERE YOU HAD TO BE AWARE OF THE BOTTOM LINE?**

***P28:** It, it (..) in some ways it would be easier, in some ways it would be more difficult. Uh having worked in the private sector, I can answer this question! Uh (..) the private sector is actually more fast moving. You're working at a much much, and normally you're working at a much faster pace.

***INT: DOES THAT MAKE IT MORE IMPORTANT THAT YOU GET IT RIGHT QUICKLY?**

***P28: I think you you, the acceptance of mistakes is not as great BUT if a mistake is made, the solution is much quicker because we've got to get on. You know, we are about making money. If we want to continue to make money, we can't afford to sit down crying about our mistakes, we've got to get on with it. Let's learn from that, get onto the next one and make sure it's OK. So it's it's it's a much faster pace to implement stuff. I think difficulties lie in concentration on making money, as a broad term, you know, not just making money (inaud) is that people concentrate on that much. So you have a bigger battle to win over support and commitment to say equality issues. And I think it, it's, you need to take, there are certain things you need to do. We can do it as an organisation because it's our job. If, take for example, I used to work in investment banking, if you were in the trading room and you said to all the traders, in the middle of their trading day (laughs) 'you've got to start thinking about equal opportunities' I can assure you, you'd meet some words you hadn't encountered for a little while (..) at the first thing! And the second thing would be, they'd turn round and say, 'do you want me to make money for this organisation? If you do, go away'. That would be the attitude. However, if you take those traders away from that environment and you do something like a theatre workshop and you tailor it to them (..) you can have good success but it's difficult. Because number one, you've got to persuade them to go and do it, number two you've got to take all their mobile phones off them and say you will not get in contact with the office at all. Which I know from talking to people that run the theatre workshops actually happened. In a theatre workshop, somebody was on the phone trading! I mean you know, so you do have a (..) a battle in that sense.**

***INT: WELL YEAH, THAT'S WHERE I STARTED BECAUSE I CAME FROM INVESTMENT BANKING MYSELF AND I, JUST LOOKING AROUND, THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY INTEREST IN IT. THERE WAS NO INTEREST.**

***P28: I think it's changed. I mean from talking to, certainly from talking to Credit Suisse First Boston, I mean I ...**

***INT: THAT'S WHERE I CAME FROM ACTUALLY!**

***P28:** and and well, talking to some of their personnel people not that long ago, they said we are really trying hard to do this. You know, there's a big push from the very top to actually implement some sort of equality policies (..) and make sure that they are enforced. You know, whereas you see, that's changed from ten years ago, it was ignored.

***INT:** YOU GET A LITTLE BIT OF IT COMING FROM THE U.S. TO HERE BUT THEN IT TENDS TO BE IN THE FORM OF, THEY'RE ALREADY AT THE DIVERSITY STAGE, SO THEY HAVE A TINY STATEMENT IN THEIR HANDBOOK AND THAT'S IT, THAT'S AS FAR AS IT GOES REALLY.

***P28:** I think we're actually much more proactive as regards equality in this country compared to the States. The States tend to go for big positive discrimination exercises, and big sweeping things, but don't actually live the things. We tend to be, our culture is that we want to get it in to our everyday life but we can come, it's almost um let's say, well really we're a bit ashamed about not doing it anyway, so we'll just do it surreptitiously and then you know, later on down the road it will all be, it will look like we've never done anything but it's all great. But that's the way we work as a nation. We're very much, bringing things in, we don't like huge impact stuff. We like it to be gradual but effect. You know and we like to see the results, long term results whereas the States is um a typical GI Joe goes 'oh oh, you've got to have X amount of people', when it's been proved to fail! I mean tokenism is rife, the there, loads of states are getting rid of positive discrimination now because of the implication, ah, it's all sorts of (inaud) but I mean also, American firms are (inaud). Goldman Sachs are the prime example, it cost them about five million quid.

***INT:** WELL IT'S THE...

***P28:**...No eleven.

***INT:** THEY HAVE TO DO IT RATHER THAN WANTING TO DO IT.

***P28:** Living it. I think living it (..) is the ultimate aim. Because living it is your biggest success because then you won't get unacceptable behaviours tolerated in an organisation. The staff will perceive that this is a fair organisation. There's always

going to be injustice, you know, people are always going to get promoted over other people and they're always going to say, 'oh it should have been me, oh, I've been here for years and years, oh', well actually but, what we're, you know, one of the things that you have to do is you have to have proof of it, so therefore your promotion is open. So therefore there will be a check on the procedures: what selection criteria were used? Why was this person chosen, do they actually tie in with the job description, do they actually tie in with the person spec. are they the best person, the best candidate available? Then that's, that's where the procedural stuff comes in (..) and practice. And managers have to keep records. I mean we (..) most organisations (laughs) don't keep records of promotion stuff! They don't keep records of of you know...

***INT: NO, NO WAY OF MONITORING ANY OF IT.**

***P28:** That's what I was going to say, how can you monitor it? If you, we're now going to say, we're going to have random sampling. You will not know whether you're going to be sampled so therefore you've got to keep the records because if you don't, you're going to be in trouble. And you know, so it comes back, the onus comes back on it. I think that's another thing about equality, is that the onus should be placed on individuals. Not only, it's not only an organisational problem, it's an individual problem as well. What can you do to make things better? And and you can and and there are various ways of doing that, very practical ways. Um saying for instance that if you have a complaint (..) don't hide it. The repercussions are not going to come back on you. There are procedures in place to bring a complaint and do it!

***INT: IT'S BELIEVING THAT YOU WON'T BE VICTIMISED FROM DOING IT, YOU HAVE TO...**

***P28:...** We have got harassment advisors now where there's a confidential, out of the line (..) telephone conversation can happen. Best advice will be given. That will go on record. That will go on report and record. But say if there is victimisation later on, then it's going to be pretty obvious where it came from. So if it does go to I.T. then, well it won't get to I.T. because we'll have to settle! I mean, well (..)

***INT: YEAH. YOU'VE KEPT PROOF! (LAUGHS)**

***P28:** Well exactly. So I think you know, practically there are lots of problems. Uh the biggest problem is convincing people that it is important.

***INT:** AND IS THERE ENOUGH MOTIVATION FROM AVOIDING I.T. FOR COMPANIES TO...

***P28:** There should be but obviously there's not because, you know, I.T.s are quite busy. They're quite busy, they've got a backlog of nine months in certain areas!

***INT:** THEY'RE NOT OUT OF BUSINESS JUST YET THEN!

***P28:** There's a lot of injustice in this world. I think the the, the the reason why things end up at I.T. is normally because line management somewhere down the line has made a mistake. And that mistake either hasn't been picked up or it's been handled badly, or the right procedures weren't in place, or the right procedures weren't followed. The vast majority of I.T.s tend to come out of that.

***INT:** DO YOU THINK PEOPLE DO THIS DELIBERATELY OR IS IT JUST A LACK OF AWARENESS?

***P28:** There is a, there is, there is, I think there is a degree of, 'I can't be bothered with this', uh 'I'm right, you're wrong, I'm going to stand by this to the nth degree.' Um there is also the uh precedence setting I.T. cases where there are actual, not semi-manufactured situations, but situations picked up and said well we're going to take this as far as we can because we want a precedent to be set. Um there are procedural problems within companies.

***INT:** YES. BUT IN TERMS OF INDIVIDUALS UM COMMITTING DISCRIMINATION, IF I CAN USE THAT PHRASE, AGAINST OTHER PEOPLE?

***P28:** I think we all, I think everybody, every single person in this country commits discrimination sometime. Um not necessarily consciously...

***INT:** ...YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING...

***P28:** ...but subconsciously. Um it's how you handle it. We all do it. I was at uh uh a conference that was run by Scope who are, who used to be the Spastics Society, on their graduate training programme and the question was asked, 'who in this room discriminates against disabled people?' I immediately put my hand up and about fifty percent of them in there, and the speaker actually said, well that's a, that's quite a high proportion, it may be because of the particular audience. People don't understand that they're discriminating against people. I mean, if, for instance, I didn't ask you the question, 'have you got any hearing problems?' when you started today. Now I don't know whether you have or not but the fact is that by not asking that very question, I've actually discriminated against a problem that you may have. (..) Now...

***INT:** HMM BUT THAT'S GOING INTO THE REALMS OF SUPER SENSITIVE AND RIDICULOUS AS WELL.

***P28:** No, that's what I'm saying, you can't be, you can't be that super sensitive BUT if, if for instance um (..) you encounter visible disabilities, we turn a, people generally turn a blind eye uh, to use a term! But I mean and you don't necessarily think you're discriminating against that person but you could be. And you could be having a big effect upon that person. You know, it's common courtesy with saying, you know, you ask and it's about how you ask. You don't just do. And other ways, people just do: that's discriminating. They might be quite able. Just because they look like they can't do something doesn't mean to say they can't.

***INT:** SO YOU THINK A LOT OF IT IS UNINTENTIONAL THEN?

***P28:** The vast majority is. I mean we (..) as a nation, I'm talking very very broad generalisms, we are not nasty people. We are generally very tolerant uh. We are also generally (..) quite conducive to different cultures. You know, given that they fit in with our way of life. Uh so we are having problems with certain areas, but that's, that's, it's education that will make that difference uh. Disability is a big one. People don't understand what problems people with disabilities actually encounter and I think that's the, that's the issue. Um (..) the problem with say, the difference between race and gender and disability is that race and gender (..) very rarely change. Disability is number one, change and even within a condition, are individual to that particular

person. (..) Someone who is profoundly deaf who can lip read can get by fine. And as long as they're looking at you they can understand you. Someone who is profoundly deaf and can sign but can't lip read, you would need a signer in the room. So you know it's just an understanding, a general increased awareness um I mean I think disability is maybe an area where companies will have to do a lot of work. Purely and simply because of the Disability Discrimination Act on equality but also because it can be an invisible problem and there is a fear, and I mean there is a genuine fear of able-bodied people, in how they react to somebody with a disability and certainly with a very visible disability. Somebody with cerebral palsy for example, there is a, with someone with a severe disfigurement, there is an immediate aversion to even having contact with that person. That's the able-bodied person's problem, not the person with the disability's problem. I think that needs to be got over. So there's, there are, that's a very big area where (..) you can include it in diversity but with that you have got to say there are specific issues we need to address in this. And that's what I'm saying, where there's, you know, you need the marriage of the old and the new because is you don't you're going to lose things. Um there are legal responsibilities on organisations where they have to do things. Uh and I think it's about twenty percent of the population have a disability of some sort. And it's a big number. I mean that's nationally.

***INT: NOT REGISTERED BUT HAVE SOMETHING?**

***P28:** You don't have to be registered any more um it's the severity of the disability. I mean people don't understand that. It's about access, it's about you know all sorts of things uh uh it's about flexibility again, you know, if somebody's got a certain condition, as long as they're still capable, and that's the thing, you have to, you have to say that as long as they're capable of doing the work, they might have to have some time at hospital or whatever, you know, build that in, treat them as an individual within the organisation.

***INT: THAT'S WHEN IT DOES GET EXPENSIVE THOUGH.**

***P28:** The cost is another, allocating the resources is another issue and it's something that equality practitioners have to be aware of. You can't do everything, so you have to prioritise. Um I mean for example (..) talking about practicalities, you want quick wins.

Quick wins give you increased kudos within the organisation. There is seen to be something at the end of the tunnel. And then you can concentrate on the longer term things as well. If you just focus on the long term, you will lose people along the line.

***INT: SO YOU'D HAVE SOME FLAGS ALONG THE WAY?**

***P28:** You've got to have that. It needs to be sign-posted. Also your interest groups will get upset, 'oh what have you done, you haven't done anything for us', you know? Alright, I might not be able to but uh generally, there's ways of doing it. I mean, the resource implication as I say, for example, disability, outside organisations, we can't (inaud) they can provide funding for ninety percent of the stuff. So I mean, you know, it's not hard to do it. There might be simple solutions.

***INT: IT'S JUST A WILLINGNESS TO LOOK FOR THEM.**

***P28:** Exactly, it's taking the time to, to find out what the problems are, looking at various solutions. You can pull in specialists that don't actually cost anything. (inaud) don't cost anything. They put you in touch with a consultant and they cost some money but it doesn't actually, you know, in the scheme of things it's not huge amounts of money. It's (..) seen to be doing that, promulgate guidance and we, we've got intranet now, we've all got intranet, so everything goes on intranet. You know, people don't necessarily look at it but it's there. They've got guidance on flexible working. Any any consultancy report that we've done, we did one a couple of years ago on barriers of uh progress for ethnic minority staff, that report's on there. Long hours working report summary is on there. The conferences reports, the progress report, you know, we name it, we put it on it. Benchmarking we've done, benchmarking in certain areas, that's on there. So people have access to it, so then they can question. Uh you know we're looking more and more at guidance for line managers but I mean I, I had a long discussion with a line manager who was doing their business plan and they said, well you haven't given us anything specific. I said that's the INTENTION. You know, we don't want to give, to spoon feed you, we want you to think about it. We're giving you very broad areas to to investigate, with examples of how you can do it but do it for your particular team, divisional director.

***INT: IS THAT WHERE THE PROBLEM COMES IN THE PERHAPS THAT IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE WHO'S NOT INTERESTED ENOUGH TO MAKE THE TIME AND EFFORT TO BE WILLING, THEN IT FALLS DOWN?**

***P28: Yes. Oh yes. Yes, without a doubt. I think you have to have champions within the organisation and they have to and (..) if you're lucky enough to have them, you use them. And that's where you'll most probably get your success. And we're, I've just said it this morning, we're very bad at networking. We are extremely bad at networking. Sharing good practice is like, you would think we were giving away the crown jewels, and it's terrible! And we're, you know, we'll work this out but I think as well there's an historical hangover when, in the old sort of, empire building was the name of the game and the more staff you had, the more important you were, the bigger budget you got, blah blah blah blah. That's all been blown out the water. But I mean even people, you know getting people that are on the same side talking to one another about issues, is hard, because that needs somebody to say, I'll actually give up my own time to organise it. British Telecom have been very successful with their women's network. They went through a period when it was falling to bits. They got a couple of people involved that were real big champions and it's got something like ten thousand people involved in it. I mean it's a huge number, there's a huge administrative exercise and there's a lot of extra work for people, but it's proven successful. And you do need to do that. It's (..) you can't create them, you just hope that you can nurture them. And I think all organisations will suffer from that. Otherwise you end up with an equal opportunities team of about thirty people because they've got to have, you know, they've got a specific task. And you don't want that because what happens is (..) I suppose it's the difference between having a centralised policy making team that puts everything out and then says, well we want the organisation to actually ameliorate all the policies into practice and what have you, and it's, or being directed through a centre, you will do this. One will work because people have to but they won't like it. The other will take much more work to get implemented but at the end of the day will be much more successful. Um I think, uh you know we're still, we're in a like (..) let's say that, we're coming towards the end of the dark ages. We're moving into a Renaissance period of equal opportunities I would say. Because that's not only organisation, that's (..) country wide um because what's happened is that we had, if you say the early things**

were like the golden age of the Greeks and there was the Romans and there were all these great ideas and this is where we want to get to, and uh, nothing really happened, I mean things did happen but you know, so then (inaud) and it all went into abeyance and they're still there but you know well we'll pick them up. And what's happened is that we've got now, you know, diversity's almost like a, a new approach and this, so that's the Renaissance period where we're starting going and we've gone through a stage where things have been gradually, you know improving but not, you know, you've not got a steep curve. And we're moving into a stage now where people are actually addressing specific problems and saying, we want practical solutions to things and we want organisational solutions. Not just for gender, you know, as I said earlier but looking at our workforce, how do we get a more effective workforce, how do we improve our workforce?

***INT: SO IT CAN WORK IN A COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENT THEN?**

***P28:** Yeah. I don't see why, I mean, just to ignore it and say, oh it's some (..) sort of left-ish, social-worker-ish, local government (..) idea of equality is not true of nowadays. I mean you're seeing there's problems, where there's other problems that are arising. Women that have been successful in organisations are having to make the choice between career and family. You know they're all, there's even, you know it's got to the extent that they're having hysterectomies so that they can't have kids, you know it's ludicrous, I mean what a situation! Oh my work's so important you know! Oh yeah, go to work, you die and that's it, so why? Why, you know? So you know there's an acceptance that life uh is not just about work as it, you know, there was an ethos that you know you you, your work has to be the most important thing in life. I think generally, in society, that's disappearing.

***INT: YOU'RE ALLOWED TO HAVE A LIFE OF YOUR OWN.**

***P28:** Yeah and I mean interests outside of work uh are impacting on work and work's impacting on interests and that sort of thing.

***INT: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR THEN WHO HAS NO POLICY IN PLACE, HAS NO INTENTION OF PUTTING ANY**

POLICY IN PLACE BECAUSE HE SAYS THAT I RECRUIT ON THE BASIS OF MERIT AND MERIT ONLY?

***P28: I'd ask him the question how he defines merit, number one. I'd look at, yeah, I'd say you, alright I'm not going to, I'm not going to sell you anything, you sell me your policy. Turn it round. You do the marketing job to me and then I'll tell you why it's not going to be successful.**

***INT: WELL I HAD THIS SITUATION AND HE WAS VERY PLAUSIBLE BUT HE HAD HIS HEAD IN THE SAND AS WELL. HE WAS SCARED TO SCRAPE THE SURFACE OFF AND SEE WHAT ELSE WOULD COME UP I THINK.**

***P28: You do, and I think you do need to have a challenger at a high level within the organisation. If your head of resources, human resources, is of that ilk, boy have you got a problem. And what I would say to him is, well when was the last time you heard anything from the IPD?**

***INT: OH HE WAS UP TO DATE, I MEAN, YOU KNOW, HE DID HAVE A VERY MIXED WORKFORCE BUT.**

***P28: But but, yeah, why, why are, why is everybody else doing it and you're not? Are you the model that we should all be working to, or is everybody, you know, is everybody else wrong and you're just the paragon of virtue that knows that you're so successful that you know, that whatever, you don't have to change at all? I'd also say, how do you know? Where's your measures? Have you done a staff survey? Are your staff happy? How successful, what are your retention rates on the people you recruit? And there's always ways around it. I think (..) there is a general acceptance that the minimum you should have is an equal opportunities statement. The absolute minimum umm that there is a great concern about equality issues in business and society as a whole and if you don't address them, I bet you somewhere along the line, something's going to go radically wrong and could even cost you your job!**

***INT: YEAH, THE STAFF DIDN'T SOUND VERY HAPPY I HAVE TO SAY! I SPOKE TO SOME OF THE STAFF AS WELL.**

*P28: Well if they are, good luck to them, they obviously don't need it. Well if they don't need it, they don't need it but say why you don't need it. Um if you don't need it, fine! I don't think there, but you know.

*INT: I MEAN IT WAS JUST HE DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT, HE DIDN'T WANT ANYBODY'S AGE, COLOUR, GENDER, OR ANYTHING TO COME INTO QUESTION, THEY WERE THERE TO DO A JOB AND THEY WERE JUDGED PURELY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR JOB. THAT WAS HOW HE SAW IT...

*P28: ...and it was, it was, you know...

*INT: ...IT WAS MIXED, IT WAS MIXED. THEY HAD PROMOTED A BLACK WOMAN, OR SOMEBODY RECENTLY THAT HE COULD TELL ME ABOUT AND UM HE JUST DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE A FUSS ABOUT IT.

*P28: I'd still like, I'd still like to look at the, at the statistics of where people were placed within the organisation, for example...

*INT: ...AND WHETHER THEY KEEP THEM.

*P28: Depending on the size, yeah, and whether they keep them. I mean how many women have they got on the board? Um how many women have they got in senior management positions? How many ethnic minorities have they got in senior management positions? Uh...

*INT: ...WELL THAT JUST MADE ME THINK, YOU KNOW, IF YOU DO HAVE THAT ETHIC AND YOU CREATE THE CULTURE, THEN A POLICY ISN'T ACTUALLY NECESSARY AS LONG AS YOU ARE DEMONSTRATING IN SOME WAY THAT THIS...

*P28: ...No, I would totally agree...

*INT: ...WHAT'S ACCEPTABLE...

***P28:** ...I don't, you don't need a piece of paper to make it work. The trouble is that generally people need something to hang their coat on. And a piece of paper tends to be a very good way of doing it. Um if you can instil an ethos of equality within an organisation, it can happen. Um, IT companies (..) the massive growth of IT in the seventies, eighties (..) whooped equal opportunities! You could be from the planet Zog! You know, if you were the best programmer in the company, you were the best programmer in the company. You know it didn't matter! The the trouble, the funny thing was though that they did all tend to be white male Anglo-Saxons, purely and simply because they most probably had the resources to get the computers in the first place so they could, you know, but that's a different question. But it, they were, they didn't have any of these (..) wonderful procedures. You just went in and did then job, worked when you liked, production is the rule. You know, get it out there, very very informal, but it worked, for that particular industry. I think you can't preach to anyone. I think that's the thing about it is that you can't preach, like I would say that if that particular company was successful, they had no problems, they had no perceived problems, then fine, carry on. BUT if it is found that there are problems then you've got to address them. And that's it. I mean, that's the, you don't have to change for change's sake. But what happens if?

***INT:** BUT IF YOU DON'T LOOK YOU DON'T SEE THE PROBLEMS AS WELL.

***P28:** Exactly. I mean you can, you can bury anything. As long as, I mean you can say oh well we most probably have promoted fifteen black women, but from what to what? What from cleaner to tea lady? I mean, well yeah but (..)

***INT:** (LAUGHS) IT'S PROMOTION ON THE BOARD!

***P28:** It looks really good, doesn't it! I mean we've promoted all these people and that. They haven't got anywhere. But you know, it's the effect of this sort of thing that I think is important. Um, I just think that it's an issue that will raise it's head and if you're not prepared for it, you can be in bigger trouble. For example if that company, if they said we've never had an IT you know, what happens if you do get one? You'll lose! Because you've got nothing in place and an IT will just say ha ha, ever heard of the ACAS guide? You know, and it's as simple as that! So it's, one other way would

be, you don't have to do a lot but think of it, it's like, you have insurance don't you, think of it as an insurance policy. You don't have to do much with it. Just have it there. Even if you have a statement and then you have, you know, procedures that, a few procedures that come out of it. You don't have to do any surveys, don't have to do any monitoring, don't have to do anything.

***INT: IT DOESN'T QUITE EMBODY THE PRINCIPLE OF IT ALL BUT IT WORKS TO GET PEOPLE DOING IT!**

***P28:** Well you don't have to, you you you, any salesman will tell you, sell to your audience. I mean it is a product. I mean that's the thing about equality, it is a product. It's as much of a product as uh (..) a CQS you know. It, it's a product. And it and and and it, if you treat it as a product, you've got to sell it and it's how you sell it to people. I mean practically, on the practical side it's very very difficult to do and it's time consuming and the people that are trying to push it through will have a lot of angst (..) and a lot of failure and feel like you've never got anywhere. You know, it really is like running through quick sand but you've got to keep going because if you don't, you sink. (..) And it it it's for us in an organisation it's very important. Uh for me in the bank it's very important um you know, for BT it's very important. We're talking about big companies uh lots of people think, obviously think it's very important because there's so much produced on it! I mean it's like (laughs) find something on equal opportunities, how many hundreds of things do you want to look at? And it is, it will, I mean, um another area is the increase in technology will change the way we work, undoubtedly. Um the head of uh the engineering division of BT was talking the other day and she said that she can see the time in twenty years time where (..) I.T. will be such that the concept of the office could disappear phwemm. So you've got other equality issues. Um you know, satellite working is on the increase um (..) the technology will be such that you will have unnecessary skills because you'll just go, I'll get onto the Net and I've got a video camera here and they've got a video camera there and I'll show them what I want and they can tell me. And I've done, do it.

***INT: AND THAT'S IT DONE, YEAH.**

***P28:** Yep so there's all those sorts of concepts that will really impact.

***INT: CAN I JUST ASK YOU ONE FINAL THING HERE ABOUT UM, THE EQUALITY TEAM IS BASED AS PART OF THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT HERE?**

***P28: At the moment.**

***INT: IS THAT LIKELY TO CHANGE?**

***P28: I think we will be associated, we will always be associated with personnel. We're actually recruiting at the present time um a specialist for equal opportunities. Not necessarily a specialist in equal opportunities but a specialist divisional manager for equal opportunities who will report directly to a sub-group of the board that has been set up on equal opportunities. Their critical remit, hopefully, as long as they don't change it too much, is to address the problem of divisional managers commitment to equality issues. So we as a team will most probably go underneath that and then be slightly hived off from the mainstream Personnel.**

***INT: SO IT'S NOT LIKELY TO BE TAKEN OVER BY THE LINE MANAGERS RATHER THAN AN HR FUNCTION?**

***P28: Equal opportunities, will at the end of the day, be principally a line management issue with policies set from the centre and specialist advice.**

***INT: SO THAT WOULD BE AT BOARD LEVEL THEN?**

***P28: It would basically be brought into the board via a divisional manager, so there'd only be two steps away from, between the team and the board um possibly three if the director of personnel still wants to keep their hand in but they're a board member as well anyway so it doesn't really you know. It will be very much a, I would imagine it would be very much a project, proactive type of union rather than a reactive union as it has been in the past. But there is, the nature of personnel within the organisation has changed as well. They've gone through a very big down-sizing exercise of practitioners to very small teams of advisors, on a geographical basis, so you know it's about fifty percent less, which was necessary. So it is very much line managers are the first people**

to become involved in these issues, so we have gone very much for mainstreaming and that WILL NOT change.

***INT: DOES IT WORK BETTER LIKE THAT?**

***P28: Uh (..) ask me in a year!**

***INT: ONCE YOUR TEETHING TROUBLES ARE THROUGH!**

***P28: I think it's always going to be problematic because of the nature of line management. Are they, that they have the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to handle it. Are the procedures robust enough for them to be able to follow it correctly? There's a, lots of ifs, buts and maybes. Generally, if I had to put money on it, I would say in the long term, it will improve the handling of equality issues within this organisation (..) because it has to and therefore um, once you get the right things in place, I think you will and I think it will make it a better organisation. I think if you, centralised, it's been proven that centralised equal opportunities doesn't work. I think of thirty years worth of data to prove that, you, as I said before we've got four thousand plus individuals that live equal opportunities every day and you know, if ten of them are not doing it, well, you know, in a big, in a major way, if you've got someone who's been racially abusive staff all the time, we've got a major problem. So it does boil down to an individual level. Line managers play a crucial role, they are crucial because they are the eyes and ears of the organisation. They see what's going on, on a day to day basis, so if you get them working well, I guarantee you'll be seen as an equal opportunities employer.**

***INT: RIGHT THEN. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.**

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED.

PARTICIPANT NO. 29 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

***INT: OK, IF YOU COULD START BY DETAILING BRIEFLY WHAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IS.**

***P29: OK, uh my responsibility is policy officer for the process of employment. It extends also to broadcasting, career services and text now, it seems I have an ever-increasing remit and um how I work is drafting speeches etc. across issues for the chairman. The other half is working directly with employers but on a national level and then the remainder is responsive work, so if anyone phones in, any member of the public or an employer I've a duty to deal with them and, like I say, I just really deal with a handful of employers to actually take forward race equality.**

***INT: AND HAVE THEY APPROACHED YOU OR DO YOU APPROACH THEM?**

***P29: It's a mixture, it's a mixture. Um some are contacts that we've had for some time, so have been passed on. Other, like I said, just a variety really.**

***INT: IS THERE ANY PARTICULAR MOTIVATION FOR PEOPLE TO APPROACH YOU?**

***P29: Yes, a number of reasons, one maybe they have been found guilty of racial discrimination at an industrial tribunal, um. Another reason may be they just want to take forward race equality, or as a wider, equal opportunities programme umm, I mean those are the two reasons, either they generally want to do it and haven't done anything before, or they've been sort of cajoled into doing it. One of the reasons for that is that they've been through an IT process or been warned if they don't do something, they will do.**

***INT: SO THE PEOPLE THAT COME OF THEIR OWN VOLITION, ARE THEY DOING IT TO AVOID POSSIBLE LITIGATION OR IT IN THE FUTURE OR ARE THEY DOING IT OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF THEIR HEARTS?**

***P29: You can never be sure but it's a mixture of both.**

PHONE RINGS IN OFFICE

PARTICIPANT TAKES PHONE CALL.

***INT: OK, SO GOING BACK TO COMPANIES THAT HAVE APPROACHED YOU, OR THAT YOU'VE APPROACHED. WHEN YOU GO INTO THEM DO YOU NOTICE THE PATTERN OF DISCRIMINATION WITHIN ORGANISATIONS THAT SEEMS TO FALL CONSISTENTLY...**

***P29: ...um yeah, the majority of companies doing well, tend to be doing well on access to the organisation. The problems tend to be in progression. Um if I limit what we're talking to, talking about to blue chip companies, they're the ones who tend to publicise most what they're doing on the equal opportunities and they have dedicated posts for that role, even up to director level. There, there has been undoubtedly increases in pretty much representation but we still don't see the progression through the ranks to the senior ranks. Yes there are a few who are doing it, exceptional people but in the main, no, but they are very similar patterns. Um (..).**

***INT: SO LOWER DOWN THE HIERARCHY WITHIN THE ORGANISATION, ARE THE PROMOTIONAL CHANCES DIFFERENT TO HIGHER UP THE SCALE?**

***P29: Yes. Usually you'll come across a ceiling which is around the middle management. People who are well qualified know generally that they will get so far and after that, it's sort of, that's where it finishes.**

***INT: AND ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR GROUPS THAT ARE BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST OVER OTHERS?**

***P29: (..) I'm asserting now, probably more Afro-Caribbean. Um Bangladeshis suffer the worst unemployment rate generally and so they don't usually figure so much when it comes to graduate recruits primarily because they're not actually, the majority of them aren't going to university, so it doesn't actually qualify for that pool but in the main, those who are getting through, Asians tend to do better. And when they say Asians, we mean more Indians, um Pakistanis, so-so but Afro-Caribbeans probably fare the worst.**

***INT: AND IS THERE A DIFFERENCE FROM INDUSTRY SECTOR TO SECTOR?**

***P29:** Yeah if you look at, again asserting but on the face of it, IT sector people, ethnic minorities seem to be doing better. Again the progressions are so great but it's still better than in for example engineering. But then again you know, engineering for example is a sector where they're having general difficulties recruiting people. But you know (laughs) the irony is that the, or paradox rather, is for the IT sector, they're suffering major skills shortages, yet excluding, consciously or not, a whole pool of talent. And that's what forms one of our sort of business case arguments. Or construction, that's another classic example where there's next to no visible ethnic minority representation.

***INT: AND HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY CHANGE IN PATTERNS OVER TIME?**

***P29:** (..) Yes, there has, undoubtedly there has been because if we compare from the sixties through to where we are now, I mean just as natural progress, representative because population numbers have increased, so you would expect, despite, even if the levels of discrimination were the same, the numbers will increase. So yeah, I mean things have got better but not to say that uh, racial discrimination is still prevalent. Society is still ridden with it and it, the problem is because it's, you're trying to tackle something you can't see, you really only deal with the actual outcomes, the consequences of it, um it always is going to be a long haul and that's why, when we talk to employers, we don't expect monumental changes quickly. You try and change attitudes and the only way you get to change attitudes really is if you start changing behaviours and as a consequence, as numbers gradually increase over time, then there's an increased learning and so oh right it's noticeable, and then that's the way you'll get to change people's way of thinking. And ultimately that's the only way which people who want all this diversity to work in an organisation, it's not going to work, you'll always going to appear as, this is experience of mistakes. If you don't do it properly then you're in big trouble because it really does come across as an HR thing, with people dismissing and phew, forget it, and it just does nothing for morale, so best avoid it if you're not going to do it properly.

***INT: WHAT DIVERSITY OR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OR BOTH?**

***P29:** Well quite, diversity, both I guess but more so diversity because it's saying, everyone's focussing on the individual now, let's look at individual talents but unless you really do have that kind of organisational culture, it's not going to work. And (..) some organisations COULD be, you know, divisive here because they can sort of do away with equal opportunities and say well why look at the group thing because you know, it's arbitrary to say that you know, to use race as your criteria for taking, actually giving training for positive action, when you should be looking at individuals, that's what's fair, it's wrong to group people. But there again you know, I always say, well (laughs) discrimination, racial discrimination by its nature is a group based thing. People see someone who's, they think, oh that's their racial origin and they have stereotypes which they associate with it. So, of course, selection for example should be on individual merit but you have to tackle it from the way in which the potential discriminator views it. You can't tackle it from your perceptions.

***INT:** SO DIVERSITY VS. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE REALLY QUITE DISTINCT CONCEPTS FOR YOU ARE THEY?

***P29:** We don't have a problem with diversity, as long as a (..) as long as diversity is seen as a, an umbrella and within that you then have equal opportunity programmes focussing on, for example, race, gender, disability, whatever other aspect you want to look at because to treat them all as the same is incorrect. Because, and this is the thing like saying equal access, equal, people aren't the same. People don't deserve and should not be treated the same in my view because everybody is unique, they're going to have different needs. It's as simple as that. And that's one of the problems for example of positive action let's say in America because what they do, in fact if you see the beneficiaries of those programmes tend to be those who probably were from better backgrounds, less disadvantaged backgrounds, let's say, and who would have probably fared far better on their own. And those who are truly disadvantaged don't benefit because A) they don't have the means of finding out about these programmes, or getting in the position to (..) benefit from these programmes. So it is very arbitrary in that way because it's just (..) alright you're Asian therefore you can get training but to actually get to that position you'll find is the more advantaged of the disadvantaged group.

***INT: RIGHT, SO YOU'RE CREAMING OFF THE ELITE OF THE MINORITY GROUP?**

***P29: Right, those who could well have done as well on their own anyway. Still being discriminated against but it's not, because you know when it comes to just a question of resources, you want to do it according to need. Clearly within say any one ethnic minority group um, you want to give help to those who are in need most, which would be a fair way of doing it, given you always have finite resources. But the experience say in the States is that quite often um those who (..) are least, who are most disadvantaged, don't tend to benefit from it.**

***INT: RIGHT. SO HOW DOES DIFFERENT BUT EQUAL SIT WITH YOU THEN?**

***P29: Different but equal. Well, the classic example is we were talking to someone yesterday, they tend to, when they're monitoring they want to monitor white ethnic minority. If they don't break it down into individual categories, Afro-Caribbean, Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, then you're not going to pick up on the sort of unique sort of educational or labour market experiences that each have. Um because of whatever reasons, certain groups fare worse within the overall group and therefore to try and treat everyone the same doesn't work. The same, the same, the same sort of, I don't know, whatever (..) remedy you have for Bangladeshi may not be correct for an Indian.**

***INT: BECAUSE I SEEM TO HAVE COME ACROSS TWO POINTS OF VIEW, FAIRLY DISTINCT POINTS OF VIEW HERE, ONE THAT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY ARE JUST THE SAME THING, DIVERSITY IS LIKE A MORE COMPREHENSIVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, UM AND THEN THAT THEY ARE COMPLETELY SEPARATE THINGS AND DIVERSITY WILL BE ABUSED BECAUSE PEOPLE WILL FIND THE LOOPHOLES, OR USE IT AS A SMOKESCREEN OR WHATEVER. AND THERE REALLY DOES SEEM TO BE QUITE A DIFFERENCE IN CAMPS THERE.**

***P29: And the problem is, like in many things, forget race relations, is that a lack of understanding if people aren't sure of their definitions, and so your academic understanding and then you've got more colloquial usage, the problem is you're just**

going to build into the analysis sort of errors and inconsistencies which are going to take you away from building the effective sort of strategy, and that's a problem. Diversity is, we would say, a way of thinking. It's an ethos, it's a culture. Uh respecting individual differences and making the most of it. Managing diversity however is the sort of operational side. It's actually putting (..) programmes of action to allow or to nurture this ethos, or bring it about. Equal opportunity programmes fits within that. To think that you, within this, until you get to this (..) this state of, we really do respect the individuals and we really do treat everyone on merit, then you do need sort of programmes in place which will pick up on which groups aren't faring as well as others and take action for them.

***INT: SO CAN YOU HAVE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMME THAT'S SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT THE UM CULTURE BEING SUPPORTIVE OF THAT?**

***P29: It can be successful but within limits. Unless you, unless, it's like (..) unless someone's being forced to do something, it's like, for example, those companies come through IT They have a team, a legal follow up here and they'll work with them saying these are things you should do. They're obliged to do them because now there's a legal agreement saying you must do it, um otherwise you'll find yourself back in you know back in front of tribunal. But if they don't really want to do it then nothing's going to change other than they will alter that practice but there are still always ways of getting around it. I mean if you simply don't want a black person in, then you can do, there's a lot of things you can do to objectively prevent that. So of course, everything boils down to wanting to do it altruistically but there again you know, we're realistic and if people wanted to do things altruistically then we probably wouldn't be in the position that we are now.**

***INT: DO YOU GET ORGANISATIONS APPROACH YOU WHO, SOMEONE IN THE ORGANISATION HAS SAID, WE WANT TO DO THIS, WE PUT A POLICY INTO PLACE, AND WE'VE BEEN QUITE STRINGENT ABOUT IT BUT WE'VE ENDED UP WITH A COMPLETE DISASTER AND WE'VE MISMANAGED IT, OR SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG, HELP US? DO YOU EVER GET PEOPLE APPROACHING YOU ON THAT BASIS?**

***P29:** You do and for a number of reasons. One may be that senior management or (..) chairman level, whatever, is clear they don't want fair access and progression to and within their organisation. It may well be because they don't have the expertise, hence they come to us. It may well be that (..) a few being so sceptical about what they're doing that, and they feel that, maybe employers feel there's been no ownership being involved, uh you know, and we know that, if you want something to be really successful, if all parties have had some say, or some involvement, it tends to get carried through that much better, so, yes it does happen.

***INT:** I ASK BECAUSE I SPOKE TO SOMEONE FROM AN INNER LONDON COUNCIL WHO'S HAD POSITIVE ACTION AND VARIOUS OTHER MEASURE IN PLACE FOR TWENTY YEARS AND THEY NOW HAVE A WORKFORCE THAT'S REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY BUT IT'S BEEN INTRODUCED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY HAVEN'T DIMINISHED THE FEAR OR THE TABOO, OR THE, CHANGED THE ATTITUDES OR PERCEPTIONS AT ALL OF THEIR WORKFORCE, SO THERE'S A COMPLETE ABUSE OF POWER GOING ON WITHIN THE STRUCTURE, FOR FEAR OF BEING TAKEN ON A DISCIPLINARY ROUTE. PEOPLE DON'T DO THEIR JOB AS THEY WOULD DO NORMALLY. AND I JUST THOUGHT, YOU KNOW, THIS IS (..) HOW DO YOU AVOID REACHING THAT POINT? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT THIS?

***P29:** Do it properly! (laughs) Well I mean, see, for example, say positive discrimination where you just select someone on the basis of their colour. You see I believe there is a very strong case for positive discrimination. It doesn't satisfy the moral hurdle but (..) as I was explaining, to change attitudes, you need to be sort of significant representation. Say, I mean this is what AT&T Bell did in America back in the seventies, they said to deal with gender issues. There was no, no women in the higher ranks at all, they were all secretaries, so they used to go to a positive discrimination programme, and the reason they gave for it, AND hence it was successful because we got significant numbers in and only in that way could we change the culture which could THEN allow, once we had proper processes, uh procedures in place to allow it to work properly, which comes back to the point that yes, you can have

proper procedures but if you don't have that real proper way of thinking, oh you know, uh the policy way of thinking then it's not, you're never going to do it properly. Um and in that way, they got people through to the senior ranks and over time, over a decade or so, then they found attitudes did change.

***INT: SO POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION FOR YOU THEN SPEEDED UP THE PROCESS?**

***P29:** It did and then it, then it comes to a question of where you sit, whether you think that's just immoral – someone gets selected out because, despite being probably the best qualified person for the job, they didn't, OR if you have two people, one black, one white, both are very well qualified for the job, you can't pick between them. So you've exhausted all the objective criteria, so then you've moved more into the subjective field, and what do you do, given that you have little or no ethnic minority representation in your workforce? Given that law allows under positive action to give specific training to people, so you know, it's getting, if there's been under-representation then it kind of helps to justify PERHAPS should colour be a criterion? The answer to which...

***INT: ... WOULD YOU PERSONALLY LIKE TO BE IN RECEIPT OF A JOB THROUGH POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION?**

***P29:** No. And that's why I say, for me it falls at that hurdle because the person who goes into it, may not feel it but, you know, I'm coming in as a token, people around them will think they've come in on this scheme.

***INT: AND YET YOU WOULD STILL ARGUE FOR MEASURES OF POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION?**

***P29:** No, I wasn't saying, no, I was saying there was a strong case for it, and I gave an example where they've done it and shown that the benefits of it but then again, like all reporting, it comes down to what bias you give. I mean they hadn't reported on the negative aspects, which would have been the male managers around them saying, well you've just come it, you weren't really qualified to do it, are you the best anyway? But there again it comes back to, you have one or two people coming through on merit, so one black person who's in a senior management role in say a finance company, he's got

a lot of responsibility on his shoulders, additional to, or he should have, some would argue that's not fair for starters anyway, um. There may well be a personality clash between him and others which will only serve to sort of confirm and perpetuate the very stereotypes they had in the first place and then move them away again from (..) allowing you know fair access and progression. It's an incredibly difficult (..) area and it's not a decision I would like to take.

***INT: YEAH, I KNOW!**

***P29: But there are, you know, it's like compensation you know, with the Swiss paying out compensation of the gold they've managed to gain over the years, but should they pay it back, you know, whose struggle is it and you know, those people who discriminated so, (..) it's pernicious. Everything that's gone on in the past, should these subsequent generations now be claiming for what's happened? They didn't suffer directly, but there again, they are still living on (..) the consequences of what's happened there, so it's just a very (..).**

***P29: I JUST, BECAUSE MY FIRST STUDY WAS INTERVIEWING A CROSS SECTION OF THE WORKFORCE IF YOU LIKE AND I ASKED WHAT THEY THOUGHT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, JUST TO SEE HOW THEY PERCEIVED IT, AND THERE WAS VERY MUCH A FEELING STILL THAT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES WAS ONLY FOR HELPLESS PEOPLE ALMOST. YOU KNOW, THAT NOBODY WANTED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH IT BECAUSE IT, YOU KNOW, IT TAINTED THEM AS THIS DISADVANTAGED PERSON AND THEY WERE LIKE, HANG ON, EXCUSE ME, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ME HERE, AND THEY DIDN'T WANT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH ANY SPECIFIC GROUP THAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED DISADVANTAGED, YOU KNOW? THEY JUST DIDN'T WANT IT TO BE AN ISSUE AT ALL, I WANT TO DO MY JOB, GET ON WITH MY JOB, BE SELECTED AND PROMOTED ON MERIT, END OF STORY. THEY DIDN'T WANT ANY SPECIAL MEASURES TO BE PUT INTO PLACE, IN GENERAL.**

***P29: Which is unfortunate. But again, that might be down to, you know, individual, but that may be down to these procedures not being explained properly why, why they**

are in place because quite often they're not explained and then people come across the word, positive, or term, positive action and immediately some associate positive discrimination. We were at a big conference last year, late last year, and they are confusing. And these are big employers, no, no, we can't do that, on merit. OK, well let's get a definition, giving them the law. And then a lot of it (..) can be sort of quashed, by communicating it properly. Like anything, you know, you justify it and then people understand. But I don't think, no you're not going to please anyone, that's a real problem I think in race relations is that you're never going to please everybody, trust me. Some people don't like the term ethnic minority, some prefer minority ethnic black and minority ethnic, I mean, (..) a special tautology...

***INT: HMM, I USED TO START EVERY INTERVIEW SAYING I'M SORRY IF I USE THE WRONG TERMS ALONG THE WAY BUT I'M TRYING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THIS!**

***P29: Yeah. But it doesn't help because I mean black and ethnic minority, I don't know what that suggests, it really doesn't make any sense to me, it's verbose is all I can think! You know, why! Black are ethnic minority and they're just tautologist kind of, spit it out! (laughs) And I don't, I'm not keen, and again this is down to me, I, I hear, well I think one of the boxes should have black British etc. on it but again you have to explain um that it's not how you see yourself, it's how the discriminator would view you. He doesn't give, he doesn't give a damn if you're born in Knightsbridge, how you speak, what you wear. He sees your primary characteristics and thinks, Asian, Afro-Caribbean, African, black, whatever and he treats you accordingly.**

***INT: YEAH. A LOT OF PEOPLE STILL DON'T FILL IN MONITORING FORMS OR TICK BOXES WHEN THEY APPLY FOR STUFF BECAUSE THEY'RE TOO SCARED OF WHAT IT'S GOING TO BE USED FOR.**

***P29: No. Understandable. Um, but even with a good explanation there are still those who won't fill it in but what can you do? That's not going to satisfy everybody I'm afraid. And it's like, that's the precarious position that the CRE treads because (..) if you get one group saying, why aren't we on the ethnic minority, why aren't you recommending us as a sort of a monitoring category? Why aren't you saying this for**

us? And all sort of, they kick up such a fuss that you're obliged to say something, and then again other groups saying, my God, the CRE, the, now look at the, we have to write this and that, it's just, you won't please everybody. That's just the nature of the work.

***INT: SO WHAT ARE THE MAJOR OBJECTIONS YOU ENCOUNTER WHEN YOU APPROACH AN ORGANISATION AND THEY WANT TO DO SOMETHING?**

***P29: First thing is we don't, oh they want to do something?**

***INT: YEAH, YEAH, I'LL REPHRASE IT, WHAT ARE THE MAJOR OBJECTIONS TO COMPANIES TAKING ON A LARGE POLICY, A DETAILED POLICY?**

***P29: We don't have a problem, is the classic point. It's like going to a prison and asking what they're in for, 'I didn't do anything, honest', it's like, we don't, we don't have a problem. We've got, look we've got X number of people here and uh, have you heard, no I haven't, well I haven't heard anyone being called black this or that!**

***INT: YEAH, I WORKED IN A PRISON FOR A WHILE AND THERE WAS NOT A SINGLE GUILTY MAN IN THERE!**

***P29: (laughs) Exactly, it's the classic line! And uh it's, well I don't hear any uh racially offensive remarks being made. Either they just haven't heard anything or they hear things which they classify as banter, not um race, racially motivated as such. Or, we've got a policy, and look we've got, uh Mustaph is here and he's doing OK and he seems quite happy. I mean those are the key, those, those, those are the sort of key reasons for it.**

***INT: THEY JUST DON'T THINK THEY HAVE A PROBLEM?**

***P29: They don't think they have a problem (..) and they genuinely believe they don't have a problem, or they could have a problem, or they do have a problem**

PHONE RINGS IN OFFICE. PARTICIPANT TAKES CALL.

INTERVIEW RECOMMENCED.

*INT: SO ONCE YOU'RE WITHIN AN ORGANISATION AND THEY HAVE A POLICY, I WAS FLICKING THROUGH YOUR LEAFLET AGAIN TODAY (CRE'S EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS) AND IT'S ENORMOUS, IT'S ABSOLUTELY VAST, THE NUMBER OF THINGS THAT A COMPANY SHOULD DO TO GET AN ENVIRONMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY...

*P29: ...What, that you've decided from that? Or that you thought generally?

*INT: UH, BOTH REALLY. HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET PEOPLE SAYING IT JUST COSTS TOO MUCH MONEY?

*P29: Very often. Uh that will be the largest of private sector companies saying that. Uh, to now require us, or to ask us to record all employees by ethnic origin is just impossible because (..) we need to get new software in, or to try and adapt what we have already, it's just too much of a burden. But (..) we, you know, come back to the same arguments. I mean if they give that or they say, it's just too difficult, or we don't really need to do it, we can actually check by paper. There's a, (..) a record company, a firm who sells, a retail store who sells a lot of CDs (laughs) has said, you know, I bet you can tell me by category of music exactly how many CDs have been sold today, and he goes, well yeah. It's not a problem. And they, they, sometimes they can't see the wood for the trees to see the benefits of why they're doing, why they're actually doing it. Just like Marks and Spencer's will monitor every type of shirt they have to see which ones are doing badly and which ones are doing well, or to identify someone who's stealing shirts or whatever, you can tell, you monitor every stage. Hence you need, that would be an explanation that I'd give as to why you need to monitor from recruitment, selection, through to everything from training, transfer and promotion, so that you can identify potential barriers. But yeah, I mean, the cost sort of burdens um the big group, you know, of common of reasons.

*INT: DO YOU THINK YOU EVER (..) WEIGH IT UP, DO YOU THINK IT'S EVER BALANCED, THE PROFITS THAT YOU WILL MAKE, THE

PERFORMANCE INCREASE, THE REDUCED TURNOVER, DO YOU THINK WILL EVER OUTWEIGH THE COSTS OF INVESTING IN EQUAL OPPS?

*P29: They do. BUT because I can't quantify it, then it's a good reason for them to say, well that's just an assertion. But you know, some things I would call reasonable assertions, you don't necessarily need to have evidence in front of you, or stats in front of you because you see it. I mean I don't need to have the statistics telling me that Victoria is polluted, I, I would agree with it. Similarly, to say that the business case arguments are (..) untrue, or will not produce any benefits for you, again is rubbish because, it's logical, there's a rationale to it. And for example, Rank Xerox I know um worked out as best they could, the costs-savings when they brought out their family-friendly policies and they could quantify it with the, well we're not in the lab, you can't control every variable and just mess about with the one um but you can still have a, there's no clear-cut cause and effects but you still make reasonable conclusions.

*INT: SO YOU SAID THAT FAIRLY STRONGLY, HAVE YOU SEEN IT HAPPEN? (..) THAT AN ORGANISATION HAS TAKEN ACTION AND THEY'VE REAPED THE BENEFITS AT THE END, AND THOSE BENEFITS HAVE OUTWEIGHED THE COSTS, HAVE YOU SEEN IT?

*P29: Yep. I mean, for example, I mean [organisation name] is one for example. Marks & Spencer's, I'll go, I'll tell you about, no, I'll tell, (..) WHSmith in Woodgreen, I don't know if this is everywhere now, but they've, an employee of theirs, an ethnic minority employee, I'll come back because there's an argument here but, um, why don't you sell cards for Id, for example? You don't sell, you sell for Christmas, birthdays, everything and mother's day, why not that? They thought, oh. So now WHSmith is selling them, boom, their profits have gone through the roof. I mean it's like if some um retailer sold Asian music. It's not in the charts but it sells masses, masses of records every week, or CDs. Uh it might be coincidental, well a white employee could well have said that but I would argue that by having a representative workforce, by in terms of racial terms or ethnic terms, then you have increased the probability of these kinds of issues coming to fruition and that's it. And you can't say yes it will or no it won't. And you don't have to employ a person for that specific role, to come up with ideas of what might be relevant for ethnic minorities because [organisation name] is the other

example. They shot an ad. of a guy and his girlfriend, uh sort of models type, walking down the street, showing off their jeans in sort of Central America, and uh Latin, Hispanics are proportionally the largest buyer of [organisation name] jeans. When it was shot in those regions that were highly populated by Hispanics, it didn't go down well at all, or at least, sales hadn't been affected. A marketing guy, who was half-Hispanic, picked up on this and he said well look, I can tell you one thing, in our culture, it's important that family and friends are seen. It's not sort of two people isolated, you know isolated like it may be in other cultures. So they re-shot it. Sales shot up like this (pointing upwards & blowing). And that can be said, you know, this is the cause and that's the effect, so clearly that has had a benefit. And of course, you know, you don't want to sort of employ people just because of your race, therefore you could have those ideas. Anyone could. But the argument follows that if through your procedures and policies, which are fair and don't adversely impact on any particular groups, then you'll have a representative force and therefore, if you have that kind of culture where it really does build on, you know, everyone making a contribution, and the bigger you get, the more difficult it becomes, but none the less, then you have a more creative workforce in that way and you can reap the benefits of it and of course, those benefits translate into profits. Um, you know, M&S have now been selling tights for black, black women. I can't remember what it is now, there's something, anyway they've discovered, and a nightie that that, actually was a dress that they were selling as a nightie for whatever and then a black lady then pointed out, well that's quite hip, not as a night-dress but as a going out dress! And now they're selling those by the tonne. So, there are clear advantages.

***INT: SO THERE'S AN OPENNESS TO IDEAS FROM INSIDE THE WORKFORCE?**

***P29: Yeah but I mean, logically, if you prevent the best person from doing a particular job, then you're not going to do so well, are you? If, if there's someone that's a far better economist, uh an Afro-Caribbean economist and you've got a white guy in there instead, purely because of that reason, then it's going to be to your detriment. It follows through in whatever example you want to give. And to have a wider pool (..) for people to choose from, of course, then you'll have the best choice because that's good for you.**

If people perceive that you're (..) good on you know equality of opportunity or just equal opps issues, whatever you want to call it, then perhaps you'll get more customers. I mean ethnic minorities have about ten billion pounds worth of spending power. Do you want to tap into that? So, and perhaps they're more likely to spend with particular firms that they perceive as treating them fairly, more fairly.

***INT: I NOTICE YOU MENTIONED PERCEIVE THERE!**

***P29:** Well it probably does boil down to perception because some people say to me, 'oh, that firm, they're really good, they've got a big glossy produced for equal opportunities' but I know for sure you know that behind the scenes there's, yes people are getting in and they're doing lots of nice things, you know, ethnic minority networks and blah blah blah. But still, some people should have moved through some of these ranks but they're not. There's still the ceiling, so.

***INT: SO WHICH HAS THE MORE POWER, THE PERCEPTION OR THE REALITY OF EQUALITY?**

***P29:** Well that's a, perception's incredibly strong. Uh it's like, you know mud sticks. Once you get a bad reputation, it's incredibly difficult to change it. Uh someone has a bad experience for example with an Asian employee. Say this is a small organisation, maybe it's twenty people, he has one Asian employee comes in and for whatever reasons they don't, he performs incredibly badly. The chances are, if he develops this sort of uh stereotype now of all Asians must be the same. And maybe he's had experiences, maybe you know he's had experience of two bad Asians, badly-behaved Asians, um, it takes a lot to change that in the main and that's something we notice, that people do tend to resort back, but I can think of, you know, you have arguments with people, not arguments but discussions, I mean not about race things but (..) you're making a generalisation but they say, 'oh no I can think of one', 'well, how many times has it happened?' and they go, 'oh just once or twice', so, 'but that's not the norm, that's just exceptions' um but those are the kind of two individual experiences, you know, they're isolated but given they don't have (..) you know, I've lost my point now...

***INT: ...TALKING ABOUT...**

***P29: ...But anyway they tend to stick, yeah, um. Let's say, well say I was an employer in the Lake District, given you had very little experience of ethnic minorities, OK so, if one employee, if one ethnic minority employee comes to work for you and you have a really bad time, that'll be, that will probably be your opinion and that will be your perception from then on, given that you don't have in a, you know, enough encounters to sort of balance that. That's what I'm getting at. So perceptions are very strong and very difficult to change.**

***INT: SO CAN YOU CREATE THE PERCEPTION OF A GOOD UM, EQUAL ENVIRONMENT IF YOU LIKE, WITHOUT PUTTING ALL OF THESE POLICIES AND INVESTING IN ACTIONS AND...**

***P29: ...What, to the outside world?**

***INT: UM TO YOUR EMPLOYEES REALLY.**

***P29: Well, probably employees are probably the worst ones to try and fool because they know. They're there and quite often you will here, I mean I, places that I've done some work before here, right. Yes, they're going on about some HR delivering open policies, nothing to do with equal opps but some new open policy and they're training everybody in delivering the chairman's message (..) but it's just PR. Right? You know, they're just paying lip service and uh yes, some little things might change but overall employees know that they don't really intend you to be able go and talk to the chairman, or talk to the directors. And they don't really care that much what you think, they'll listen to their key advisors and that's it. So (..) it's not easy to fool employees, some maybe, but in the main you won't because they're experiencing and they know what the issues are.**

***INT: ONE OF THE OTHER TROUBLES THAT I'M HAVING IS THAT IF YOU, IF YOU DO LIKE AN ATTITUDE SURVEY OF EMPLOYEES, THEN THE MOMENT YOU PUT IN ANY INTERVENTIONS OR TRAINING, OR MEASURES, THEN YOU'VE RAISED THE AWARENESS TO THE POINT THAT YOU'VE RAISED THEIR EXPECTATIONS AS WELL. SO IF YOU DO NOTHING AT ALL AND**

YOU ASK SOMEONE, ARE YOU HAPPY WITH IT, AND THEY SAY 'WELL YEAH IT'S FINE, I'VE NEVER HAD A PROBLEM', BUT IF YOU START SAYING, WELL HAVE YOU GOT THIS, AND HAVE THEY DONE THAT FOR YOU, AND THEN SUDDENLY THEY'RE, 'OH NO, THEY HAVEN'T DONE ANY OF THAT FOR ME'. SO ALTHOUGH THE COMPANY HAS MADE MORE EFFORT, THEY DECREASE THE SATISFACTION OF THE WORKFORCE. ANY EVIDENCE OF THAT? EVER COME ACROSS IT?

*P29: Yeah.

*INT: YEAH? HOW DO YOU GET OVER IT?

*P29: Well, advise them what to do. I mean it boils down to whether they were genuinely trying to make a change or whether they are doing it as a PR exercise, let's call it. If they were genuinely trying to do it, then the chances are people wouldn't have, I guess they might have questioned it but they will see (..) best they can that you know, the direction they're moving is the right one. OK, you're not doing everything correctly in the first place but none the less, what they're doing they're doing, you know, genuinely. Umm, for those who are doing it as a PR exercise, yeah, it's going to be to their detriment and as an example of diversity, they were saying, you know, do it properly or just don't do it because it will worsen things.

*INT: SO WHAT'S THE BEST WAY OF ILLUSTRATING TO YOUR EMPLOYEES THEN THAT YOU ARE COMMITTED TO WORKING TOWARDS EQUALITY?

*P29: (..) By mainstreaming. By (..) a: well getting the proper advice. OK, so if you're told, these are things you need to do, then do them. I know that sounds really like I'm really dismissive but that's it, actually do it. People know what do I think, a lot of them do know what to do but don't want to do it, so they have a real piecemeal approach. The only way to get towards true equality, I say towards, is to have mainstreaming through all your business activities. It's not an HR thing, it's something that's got to come from the top. And whatever it's doing, whether it's checking your suppliers, asking them questions about, 'do you have an equal opps policy?'. Do they when it

comes to (..) tenders, 'are you ensuring that the information about this is going out to all communities?', 'are ethnic minority organisations getting a fair go?'. Uh, so in every aspect of your business, equal opportunities should be an issues, it should be questioned.

***INT: AND HOW WOULD THAT AFFECT YOUR AVERAGE MAN ON THE SHOP FLOOR FOR EXAMPLE? (..) HOW WOULD HE KNOW THAT ANY OF THIS WAS GOING ON? HOW WOULD HE KNOW THAT HE WAS WORKING IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF EQUALITY?**

***P29: Because the organisation may well have communicated it to them. Maybe personal letters from the head, maybe in a newsletter um there are plenty of examples we had of people, organisations who've done that. Maybe have a newsletter dedicated to equal opportunities – Littlewoods for example, they do. So it's a clear message that equal opportunities is important to us. Then to get over any scepticism, you have to then, they have, they want to see results. So naturally (..) you won't perceive them in the short term but, you know, by the medium term, you should see some effects, or consequences of the actions that you've taken. Maybe (inaud) these are things that we're doing, maybe tag on, saying, so you report back saying, this is what's changed for the better. (..) And maybe you know, but, you know the person on the floor, he should sort of see and feel the differences. And that, you know, like I say, that's why pulling, trying to pull the wool over the eyes of the employees is the worst thing you can do because they're there. They do know. Over the eyes of those who are outside is far easier um but trying to do so for employees is not so wise. Because they will know. They will know if managers have been taking more account of equality issues. You know, if all of a sudden you were a victim of racial harassment and you told your manager and he's going oh no no no, I'll sort it out and have a quick word and that's it, or just say, yes, you know that's really bad, but not do anything about it and then all of a sudden (..) ah, now there's a procedure in place, oh right, let me interview you, let me interview that person, well we'll get independent person and we'll have this written down formally and blah blah blah. Those are differences and those are things that people will notice and think, oh right, yes it's not just a con.**

***INT: SO DO YOU STILL GET ORGANISATIONS APPROACHING YOU WANTING QUICK FIXES, SHORT-TERM ANSWERS, OR ARE THEY AWARE THAT THIS REALLY IS A COMMITMENT OVER A LONG-TERM?**

***P29: I don't think they're under any illusions that (..) things will happen overnight. But what, in the main, what they do want, uh is just to alter little bits of their practices. They're too scared of a major upheaval. They're very scared of finding out where they are! (laughs) They know they're bad, just from what they see but in the same way, they don't want to share their auditing material with us, i.e. ethnic counting by grade, because they're wary of what they're going to think but the problem, again that's another perception of the CRE and maybe some officers here DO give that impression, umm, I think right, like the police and the SS, they're going to come in and you know rip us apart if we tell them anything. But it's not the case. We're here to advise and assist. Of course if there's something that we find out about that, and they're NOT willing to change uh, then (..) it's subject to maybe an investigation. Then again most of the big cases are wise to the fact there's two-hundred and twenty odd of us and how the hell are we going to? We haven't got the resources to investigate everyone.**

***INT: YEAH, HOW MUCH DAMAGE CAN YOU DO? (LAUGHS)**

***P29: Well no, exactly, I mean, it's impossible, so!**

***INT: SO, YOU MENTIONED SORT OF UM, FEAR OF FINDING OUT WHERE THEY ARE AND STUFF, WHAT ARE THE MAJOR FEARS?**

***P29: Yeah, the percep (..) they don't understand perhaps what the commission's role is, they just see us as policing and coming in. Um, perhaps they see us a bunch of cavaliers, racial cavaliers, I don't know. Uh there's (..) it's amazing when you go to meet them, you sense, (..) you you can look at the body language of people, and when it's a big place, they're all sat there (laughs) and they're all, like, they listen to every word and you can tell that they're being very careful of what they're saying, uh, holding onto every word. Um you have to assure them. So through your tone and your body language, and what you say. I mean the first, you know the content obviously the first ten minutes, indirectly saying we're here to assist and work within the parameters YOU**

set. We're not saying, you must. And if what we're concerned with is your direction and travel. We're not worried about where you are, as long as you want to improve, and two, you know we understand that it takes time.

***INT: SO BREAK THAT FEAR DOWN THEN, WHAT IS THAT FEAR OF? THEY'RE ALL DEFENSIVE BECAUSE?**

***P29: There's a fear of us and what we might do to them.**

***INT: RIGHT.**

***P29: There's a fear of (laughs) the burden of taking action on it, given they've got a fair idea of where they are, and it may not be good. Um, they don't want a major upheaval in terms of putting aside so much resources, particularly money, and all that towards it. Um, yeah, it's a fear of what it might take. And there's also a fear of the unknown I think. Particularly in some institutions where (..) real sort of old traditional cultures, let's say. They are wary of what they don't know. Um they don't, I'm sure there are a lot of people who hold very influential positions who have very little experience of ethnic minorities and you'd be surprised what they think! I mean, you know, it was only like ten, twenty years ago, twenty or thirty years ago that people thought that black people had tails! You know, so it wouldn't surprise me, well it doesn't surprise me because I know some institutions who just don't who have no idea about ethnic minorities (laughs) and they really do hold to the oldest of the stereotypes or images and behaviours that they perceive.**

***INT: HAVE YOU NOTICED A CHANGE IN (..) IN THOSE KINDS OF ATTITUDES THROUGH TIME AS WELL?**

***P29: I think, without the CRE's intervention, or any other agency, um those will change over time because a) the population is growing, so you've got more and more ethnic minorities in schools (..) they're obviously going to school and therefore the kids there, the white kids must get more experienced and they learn. So even if their parents perhaps are holding onto their sort of racist attitudes, at least they're in a position to judge both from their experiences. Um so, you know, there is a sort of natural learning process anyway. They're more acquainted than they used to, I mean I was born and**

brought up in South Wales, so there must have been five of us in the school who weren't white, but I never had any real problems. I mean, nothing really, I mean, you only get called names as much as we used to go round calling people with ginger hair, or whatever you know? But I remember when I went to my mate's house for the first time, his sister had never seen anyone who wasn't white! But you know, that's kind of why it's (inaud). It's like, oh I go to the video shop and he goes, do you work across the road in the restaurant, the Indian restaurant? I said no. 'Oh you must work at the hospital', he thought I was a doctor or a waiter and I know some people, some ethnic minorities or some white liberalists who, 'ooh, no no no' they jump down their throat and it's the wrong approach to take because you've got to take into account they just don't know. Like I don't know (..) certain fields I haven't got a clue and I might put my foot in it. But you should be able to pick up on those who just mistakenly have done so and those who have purposefully do so.

***INT: WELL I SPOKE TO SOMEONE ELSE WHO SAID THAT THERE WAS A NATURAL BALANCE HAD BEEN REACHED BETWEEN THE SEXES IF YOU LIKE, THAT SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION HAS, WAS, NOT ELIMINATED BUT WAS A LONG WAY AHEAD AND THAT RACIAL DISCRIMINATION HAD CHANGED IN NATURE IN THAT PEOPLE REALISED THAT IT WASN'T ACCEPTABLE IN THE WAY THAT IT USED TO BE. BUT THAT THEY HADN'T ACTUALLY CHANGED THEIR ATTITUDES, JUST LEARNT TO BE MORE COVERT ABOUT IT. AND THAT WAS HIS FEELING, EVEN THOUGH, HE WAS WORKING WITH UH FRESH GRADUATES BASICALLY, HE WAS DOING THE TRAINING FOR THEM, AND HE SAID I HONESTLY DON'T THINK THEIR ATTITUDES HAVE CHANGED THAT MUCH. I THINK THEY'RE JUST WARY OF THE LANGUAGE THAT THEY USE NOW.**

***P29: Hmm. I agree. I think it's changed from the overt to the covert. And now it's all the more difficult to agree with. Um and the fact that it's covert and you know, (inaud) to institutionalise discrimination, of course, they are you know, what appears to be sort of colour blind, more than anything but um, but you know, you're talking about attitudes that have been around for centuries. You know and it's sort of entrenched in principles uh, of this society and you're not going to eliminate it, or eliminate it quickly.**

But I would say that things have changed. There has been a positive progression but of course there's still rife.

***INT: DO YOU THINK THERE'LL EVER COME A TIME WHEN YOU'LL BE OUT OF A JOB?**

***P29: I hope so but I don't (laugh) I'm a, I'd be probably one of the few people who can say I probably have got a job for life, whether I want it or not! (laughs)**

***INT: YEAH THAT AND UNDERTAKERS! (LAUGHS)**

***P29: (laughs) Yeah, there's a box with my name on it! There's um there's um, and the difference between sex discrimination and race is that (..) to, they operate, I mean, it's two different, two different levels because race, the word racism, which is so loaded, I mean the connotations are so different to anything about sexism. Both are wrong, but I mean when you think of the experience, I mean it really does conjure up the most negative of experiences. It comes from things like slavery, the worst name-call, whatever, and violence. But you don't get that with sex discrimination. I think a lot of it is, woman in the home, that kind of, the kind of more jocular side of things um and it's easier to talk about. I think in the main, people find it far easier to deal with.**

***INT: WELL MOST PEOPLE HAVE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN.**

***P29: Quite. And but, again as you say, most people recognise now to make jokes etc. is unacceptable and on the one (..) and on the other, they ask, I suppose it's described as more sort of latent racists, they don't actually approve of it and they think it is wrong. They're not willing to go out and do anything about it, or challenge it when they see it but there again, they still aren't aware of their (..) prejudices themselves. Because if you're not aware of it, then you're not really going to be able to tackle it. Because if you don't recognise it in something, what are you going to do? And that of course will make this person's précis quite right. It's prevalent. I mean I can't think it's as prevalent as it was but I mean I just accept that it is all but definitely changed, that's one positive thing, well I'm thinking it's positive, maybe it's not but (..) those, I'd say this generation know what it is, maybe the last, they're a bit wiser to things. Uh, that's for,**

that's been, I'm sure that's changed. But those who still hold those sort of most influential positions or whatever we're effectively looking at, a lot of them...

TAPE RECORDING ENDED. INTERVIEW CONCLUDED.

PARTICIPANT NO. 30 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

***INT: OK, IF YOU COULD START BY OUTLINING BRIEFLY WHAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH EQUAL OPPS IS.**

***P30: Um (..) Let's start with the beginning I suppose um I mean my involvement, my sort of first, real official type of involvement came when I joined the Equal Opportunities Commission as a Commissioner and that was the sort of formal introduction and into equal opportunities. I think my connection before that was when I decided I'd had enough of working in industry and I decided, well I would, obviously do some consultancy, you know, like you, you know you need to earn a living and keep yourself going um but I also wanted to get involved in I think community is probably the right word. Community type activities and that took me into doing some training for and organisation called the Windsor Fellowship.**

***INT: NO I DON'T KNOW THAT ONE.**

***P30: Which is a um it's a charity but it's based on the positive action, I mean you're probably very au fait with the legislation, it's under the positive action programme bit of the Race Relations legislation which says you know you can set up particular training programmes for ethnic minorities. And this was done in conjunction with industry, well both public and private sector, um as well as, you know, the (..) well the good and the great were interested. And it, my role was literally, I mean it was training and facilitating, um outside of university time, the young and the graduates, who had applied to the Fellowship, had been successful in being selected in conjunction with a private or public sector organisation who would be their kind of mentor and support for the three years that they were at university. And someone like me just came in and ran a personal effectiveness programme. And you would stay with for three years or whatever. And the programmes were about um leadership, team-building, that sort of thing that you would get as an undergraduate, or a graduate working in industry. But the whole issue was apparently the industry was saying, 'well where are all these black graduates?' You know, 'we can't get them.' And we're saying well we know they're**

there, so what is going on that you can't get them and when they do come they don't stay. So they agreed they would work on their bit, which is the sort of culture bit and we would work on you know the presentation of the personal sort of thing, plus obviously enhance people's skills. I suppose, so it goes further back than my EOC days but I mean shortly after that I was appointed to the EOC and then I REALLY got into the issue of equality. I mean before I really, you know I believe sort of, my background is human resource management and management development.

***INT: SO YOU HADN'T DEVELOPED IT AS A SPECIAL AREA OF INTEREST?**

***P30:** Not particularly. I mean obviously the two are connected and of course starting to work in it, that's what made me become a lot more, a) interested and because I was exposed to a lot more inequality, um obviously one has one's personal experiences because of who I am it would be impossible to say you know, that I've been through life sort of discrimination or you know prejudice free, which I think is you know, um a part of life if you look like me and whatever but um I think that that's really when I got more involved and obviously began to go more in depth into the issues. And then of course, combined with my private sector background, you know I could see how you know, this is about human resource management, IN organisations. I'm not talking about the social justice aspect because I think overarching all of this is a fundamental social justice position, but in terms of organisational business case, which is what you said in your letter, but it's quite clear that human resources you know, there's a clear business case for it, so that's really my involvement and I guess I've been working connected to the field, um not necessarily specialist but connected to it, in the last oh I don't know, eight years.

***INT: SO HAVE YOU SEEN PATTERNS OF DISCRIMINATION CHANGE OVER TIME WHILST YOU WERE WORKING PREVIOUS TO THIS?**

***P30:** Um yes, I mean I think some of the direct and overt discrimination has changed. Um I think organisations um, I guess it's kind of like a cyclical thing. As the industrial tribunals have got older and as they have made landmark decisions, organisations are much more interested in a) keeping their legal, meeting their legal responsibilities and of course it's met in varying degrees. So a lot of the stuff is so (..) some of it

inadvertent to be quite honest and not necessarily, some it due to lack of awareness but some of it deliberately subtle because it, you know, you could think, gracious, you know, you don't do that sort of thing anymore, say that sort of thing anymore because society outside is moving on, so you can't just look at it as (inaud). I think it's become much more subtle and I'm talking across the board. I think you know when you get organisations who can't explain why for example they've hired, they've had, not hired, but they've had let's say women or black people working for them from the inception of the organisation yet, you know fifty years later, they can't explain why one or two, because by the law of averages statistically, somebody should be able to get through. And they, they can't explain why. What is happening? And they fumble around, and you know, so I think that's pretty obvious. Organisations obviously who've taken positive steps to ensure that they're looking at barriers, looking at who's affected by what, I mean obviously you're seeing more women coming through in that sense. I think the race issue is still (..) difficult because I think people don't want to grasp it and (..)

***INT: THAT'S COME UP A LOT ACTUALLY. ALMOST EVERYONE THAT I'VE SPOKEN TO FROM MY EXPERT SAMPLE HAS SAID THAT THERE'S A NATURAL EQUALITY BALANCE REACHED NOW BETWEEN THE SEXES BUT THAT RACE IS STILL SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE JUST DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT.**

***P30: A natural equality balance reached? Well I would dispute that, coming from the EOC.**

***INT: WOULD YOU?**

***P30: Without a doubt. If you look at the statistics, which you've no doubt looked at, there is no way that there's a natural balance. I think women are still having to work harder and the men and women thing in Britain, um, statistical card that we produce which I get every year because the EOC sends me one, will indicate that that is not so. I mean you've got fifty percent of medical graduates coming out that are male and fifty percent female.**

***INT: IS IT STILL VERY INDUSTRY SEGREGATED, THE DISCRIMINATION?**

***P30: Yeah, two percent of consultants of women. Only because they started looking at how they train consultants and looking how the network, I hesitate to use the word 'old boy network' but that is what it is, how it works. So I think (..)...**

***INT: IT'S NOT...**

***P30: I would, no, no it's not quite there. And I think even, the civil service itself has done remarkably well but even then, you know, I could name the five top women in the civil service, well it used to be five, I mean now that Stella Rimmington is retired, um you know who else is there? There's a lady at HM Customs, a lady at the Welsh Office, there's Barbara Mills, the lady at the Child Support Agency has gone.**

***INT: IT'S JUST A HANDFUL OF STAFF.**

***P30: So it's a handful. And in the middle ranks, if you look at the Cabinet Office figures, women are still not there. And in industry, that's just (..) that's reflected in industry. So, I would be very, I would like them to tell me...**

***INT: ...NO, WELL IN FAIRNESS, IT WAS MORE WITH REFERENCE TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION THAT WAS COMING THROUGH AND HOW PATTERNS OF DISCRIMINATION HAVE CHANGED. AND PARTICULARLY PEOPLE WHO ARE WORKING WITH UM NEW GRADUATES, THEY'RE FINDING THEN THAT IF YOU ASKED A TWENTY-FIVE YEAR OLD ENGINEER UM WHAT THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF A FEMALE ENGINEER OF EQUIVALENT AGE AND QUALIFICATIONS, THAT THEY WOULDN'T SEE THAT THERE'D BE ANY DIFFERENCE. THERE WAS MORE OF AN EXPECTATION THAT WOMEN WERE AS CAPABLE AS MEN FROM THE YOUNGER GENERATION BUT THAT HADN'T TRANSFERRED TO EQUALITY AS FAR AS RACE WAS CONCERNED.**

***P30: That's right. And and it translates in that men, a lot, a lot of men will say that but when it comes to promotion or whatever, subtle things, then somehow begins to emerge. Um and you know (..) some of the work that I'm in, albeit it's small bits of**

work that I've done in large organisations, it's the same issue. You know they start off being equal and as soon as the woman starts getting ahead, in some organisations, not every single time, in some areas they find it much harder. Much much harder. You know, I don't know if you talked to anyone from British Airways for example but their apprentice engineers, women, under modern apprenticeships, have a much harder time. The pilots have a much harder time.

***INT: THEY'RE STILL HAVING TO DO MORE TO BE TREATED EQUALLY?**

***P30:** Right. And they, you know, and it's not just the official progress, it's all the other things that they have to cope with, which then undermine, say the expectation that they're not going to do well, the expectation that, you know they're still subjected to undermining remarks, undermining comments. That is the issue.

***INT:** YEAH. YOU SEE THIS IS THE OTHER OBSTACLE THAT GETS CITED TIME AND TIME AGAIN IS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE AN ORGANISATION THAT IS PUBLICLY COMMITTED TO EQUALITY AND THE PEOPLE AT THE TOP ARE WELL UP FOR IT AND DO EVERYTHING THAT THEY CAN BUT IT JUST DOESN'T FILTER THROUGH BECAUSE THE PEOPLE AT LINE MANAGER LEVEL DON'...

***P30:** ...That's right. That's absolutely right and if you look at DFE [Dept. for Education & Employment] Michael Bishard is absolutely and totally committed to making it work (..) and you've still got bits of it. Now they, the civil service generally has done well too, because they've become more flexible, um I think the case law has not been on their side.

***INT:** SO IT'S NOT CHANGED THAT MUCH THEN, IT'S JUST BECOME MORE COVERT, OR?

***P30:** I think progress has been made, I think, I think it would be unfair to say that progress hadn't been made. You know, I mean if you think of seven years ago when, as I said, you know, consultant surgeons, they were like .01 percent women and now they're two percent. But if you look at the National Health Service for example, something like, what eighty percent of the National Health Service staff are women?

(..) All, not all but a significant, disproportionate amount of managers are still men. Teaching. The majority of teachers? Women. The majority of Head teachers? Men. So I think, you know, while people are moving through the ranks, I would not, you know I wouldn't want to undermine progress but there is no way I would say we're almost there.

***INT: DO YOU THINK THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SECTORS? THE SECTORS YOU'RE CITING ARE PUBLIC SECTOR REALLY...**

***P30: ...Well the public sector in my view have always been ahead. I don't think it's, because they've been forced to be ahead because they're much more under scrutiny than some of the private sector. And and I mean the private sector, bits of the private sector that are beginning to move ahead, are the ones who a) are usually the creative ones anyway who said, yeah well there's benefit in this. You know the Rank Xerox's of this world, who said, well actually, if you don't let these women come back, or we don't let them work flexibly, we've just invested ten years in them, it's better to have them back. It saves us some recruiting costs, which is the business case, I mean, you know, Rank Xerox worked out how much money they saved in a five year period by allowing people flexibility, particularly senior women managers. To work in a different way, because they get them back, they get all the expertise back, I think and the goodwill. So there's those organisations that are far and few in between and then there's the most of them in the middle, who are still struggling. Absolutely still struggling.**

***INT: BECAUSE I HAD A FEELING AS WELL FROM SOME OF THE PEOPLE THAT THEY VIEW THEMSELVES VERY MUCH AS, THEY'RE JUST EMPLOYING THE PEOPLE WHO ARE BEST FOR THE JOB, BECAUSE IT WAS ONLY ABOUT MONEY. THEY WEREN'T CONCERNED ABOUT EQUALITY BUT BY TRYING TO MAKE THE MOST PROFIT THEY COULD, THEY WERE EMPLOYING THE BEST PEOPLE FOR THE JOB AND THAT WAS HOW THEY SAW IT. THEY HADN'T SCRATCHED THE SURFACE AT ALL...**

***P30: ...That's absolutely right. That's absolutely right. Some people hadn't scratched, and they said, well do you expect us to positively discriminate? Well, no, but if you're saying you want the best person for the job and you don't open your net as**

widely as possible, how do you know you've got the best person for the job? And if the people who are recruiting are consistently recruiting in their own image, that doesn't tell me you've got the right person for the job, because you're recruiting the same approaches, the same skills, you're not getting the creative and innovative thinking if you have a diverse population base.

***INT: SO WHAT DOES AN ENVIRONMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MEAN TO YOU THEN?**

***P30: To me?**

***INT: YEAH.**

***P30: Well I think it would mean exactly what you just said, which is that you can actually look around and say that you've got the best person for the job because it would kind of reflect the population and I don't, I don't mean the population per se, I mean the qualified population for example for that job and obviously that will vary. Um so, now that more and more women engineers are coming through, I would be very surprised if a very large organisation doesn't have you know, I don't know, X number depending on how many they're recruiting, applications from women. Or, equally, if you go into traditional areas, applications from men because you know, the way manufacturing industry has been decimated, men are doing more and more of the jobs that used to be traditionally thought of as women. They changed the job titles of course to make it sound more important but! So I think the environment a) would be, it would be what I would call diversity, real diversity, which is a reflection. You'd look around, the kind of thing that you'd expect to see in an American organisation. You don't see them everywhere in America, but in most organisations you will see a diverse population so, I mean I could name about a dozen top, for example, black American men and women and white women in America. Uh, I know their population is several times larger than ours, it's equivalent to um the European Community but, without having to name perhaps a politician or whatever. You know their House of Representatives is still pretty poor in terms of representation but in industry, and in Wall Street, I mean one of the, one of the top women bankers in Wall Street who, you know, is a black woman. Well I mean she's actually nowadays Human Resources Director for**

one of the big merchant banks. Could I find anybody who's not in the canteen or sweeping the floor in a merchant bank in the UK, who might be black and a woman? There are a few women but they, they cope, either by behaving like the men, or they end up, you know, making a Hob, Nicola Horrick, Hob, whatever her name is [widely reported sex discrimination case of a top female banker in 1997] OR they get large payoffs because they get blatantly discriminated against when they're pregnant. I mean you've probably seen quite a few cases. But in the City, I would, you know, I'm sure I can't be sued for libel! But I am sure that there's a hell of a lot going on.

***INT: YEAH. WELL I CAME FROM THAT ENVIRONMENT AND I SAW QUITE A BIT OF IT. IT PUSHED ME INTO THIS AS WELL I THINK, AT JUST HOW RIDICULOUS THEY WERE IN THEIR POLICIES! (LAUGHS)**

***P30: Yeah. Absolutely. And you might get 'good practice' people like Midland Bank, or NatWest and TSB who have TRIED as hard as they possibly can to make progress in the area of equality. I know, I don't know how successful, um talk about how successful they have been, because again they're hitting (..) some of the conventions of the banking world. So, to me, equality is about people being able to be selected on merit, to come back to your point. And that by the law of averages, to me, should reflect what's going on around and you know, women and men are coming out of university, for example, if that's what a job requires, in equal numbers, that it says to me, you know, somewhere in your organisation, we should be represented. Uh I think in smaller organisations, small to medium size businesses, or small businesses not medium because I don't think medium size businesses have got an excuse but in small businesses, I think that might be a bit more difficult because they tend to recruit family and friends, you know and that perpetuates.**

***INT: YEAH. DO YOU THINK THERE IS A SIZE LIMIT ON AN ORGANISATION THAT CAN BE DIVERSE?**

***P30: No. I don't think so. I mean I think if you've got six people, if you look at it from the business case which is what you're looking at, I don't want six people who are the same. I mean people talk, and that's one of the things when I do management development training, we talk about team and team leadership and you know team building, whatever and I say, look around this room, you've got six people who look**

like you. Does that capitalise on the benefits of the team? I mean it might do, in some bits but if you've got, if you're a creative organisation, you know, what would you add, what value would you add by having a more diverse team? You know, not as a woman for the sake of having a woman but for the sake of having somebody who might see things differently. So that's, that's what I call diversity and I don't think there's a size to it. I mean if you've got six people in an organisation, a small organisation, it's probably even MORE critical to have that diversity, than if you've got a large organisation where you can hire loads of specialist and you know the best brains in the house of something because you can afford to pay for them. So I don't think there's a size limit.

***INT: SO IT'S UM BRINGING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES TO A TEAM ENVIRONMENT THAT YOU SEE AS CRUCIAL TO THE BUSINESS CASE IS IT?**

***P30:** That to me, that to me is about, well I think it's that, I mean I think, and all that goes with that which is about creativity, innovation, seeing things, I mean you wouldn't get some of the stupid mistakes that have been made by organisations. Large organisations naming things, sending it to another country, only to find that the name is totally inappropriate. And that has happened! And and was it um Lever Brothers? Or the one with the Persil? Or somebody, some ad, and of course in the Chinese things it goes that way, and...

***INT: OH RIGHT, THERE WAS A NUMBER PLATE ONE OR SOMETHING AS WELL.**

***P30:** Well there was all kind of things, there was naming of a car. I mean it's always happened. I mean when we worked for British Leyland we had the same thing but you know I'm talking about deep dark old days when we didn't know, we weren't quite aware about the benefits of diversity in an organisation. You know, when you name something and send it to Germany and it was embarrassing! Because it was named from a you know a British white perspective and no-one looked at the German translation. Um, so that's, I mean that's simplistic stuff but you know if you look at it from customer needs, the customers are diverse. Even if they look the same, they're diverse, so you do need to be aware. You see equality is not for me not just about men

and women and black and white, it's about diversity in population, population needs. You know people with disabilities need, might need things doing differently, same things but you might need to approach it in a different way. So how do you, if you're going to be successful, the private sector customer is your answer, isn't it. That's where you start and you work backwards. You might have the most brilliant product, but if you don't meet your customer needs, they ain't going to buy it! So I think that's where it starts really and that's why it's so critical.

***INT: SO WOULD YOU ARGUE FOR DIVERSITY OR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY?**

***P30:** I don't, well I don't think you can have diversity without equality because I think equality for me is about fairness. Um you know coming back to selecting people, ensuring you have a working environment where people are selected on merit. If people are disadvantaged or kept out, you remove those barriers. So it's starts with that. Then that will underpin diversity because if you remove the barriers, you will get the diverse population. If you don't remove the barriers, then you're going to keep getting men, or you're going to keep getting the women, or you're going to keep out you know sort of minority groups. So to me it underpins and it goes hand in hand because people talk about diversity. When you go in and the organisation's is still unfair. They say well we've got black people here, we've got six percent of them. Where are they? Oh, well they're all working in the canteen and they sweep up, or they're all in the public, for example in the civil service, I know they've got a um one of their priorities this year and last year was looking at the race issue. They're all down here! And they've all been there for ages. Now by the law of averages, you know, one or two should at least be at HCO, perhaps, would you say? Very few and yet they employ a reasonable percentage. So they will show you the figures but if you don't ask them about what's behind it.

***INT: THE STRUCTURE YEAH.**

***P30:** It looks good. You know, six or seven percent, or eight percent of minority population is pretty good when you think of it as, the the the stretch is what, five and a half or nearly six. But when you look at where they're located. And it's the same with women in organisations. That's how I know we haven't got there yet. 'Oh loads of women' and I say yes, have you got a woman regional manager, 'uh no', this is the

retail business! (..) How many of the staff are women? 'Ooh about ninety percent'. Who are the managers? 'Oh men'. Oh fine, OK, you know!

***INT: SO WOULD YOU MAKE A DISTINCTION THOUGH BETWEEN TRADITIONAL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY AS WAYS OF APPROACHING?**

***P30: Uh I suppose there is a distinction but I think they're integrated. I mean I think even if you have a diverse population you might not have equality because people are not treated fairly, they're still pigeon-holed and stereotyped and (..) you know, not have access, you know the barriers are still there to certain things. Whereas if you've got sort of equality as I would, equality to me is about fairness, where people can progress in an organisation. Unless, by progressing I don't necessarily mean up the hierarchical structure, I mean use their talents and abilities. Recognise them for what they bring and who they are. Um then you know you will capitalise on the diversity of an organisation. It's as simple as that. So I wouldn't, I would distinguish it in the sense that you can't have one without the other and that, to me it starts with equality, but if you have equality then you get diversity and then it becomes integrated.**

***INT: RIGHT. NO I JUST, IN TERMS OF PEOPLE LIKE PEARL KANDOLA MAKING A QUITE SEPARATE DISTINCTION...**

***P30: I think it crosses over, I think with a big shade of grey in the middle. If you've got fairness, you will achieve diversity. If you haven't got fairness, you might hire people like, let's go back to the American example because Britain always compares itself with America, where the positive discrimination or the quota system in America has enabled people to hire from their local population of minority groups or whatever, Hispanics or whatever. But they're all in there, they can't do, that's where they STAY. And they say, oh look we've got our five percent and they tick the box. So they look diverse but there's no fairness and equality. A lot of people there can't read, write, they do all the menial jobs and they do it because they need it and they're not going to get another chance. So I think, you know it's (..) you need to be, you need to distinguish it but I don't think you can totally separate it because one follows on from the other.**

***INT: WOULD YOU ARGUE FOR POSITIVE ACTION OR AGAINST?**

***P30: Well positive action is a legal option. You mean positive discrimination?**

***INT: NO, I MEAN POSITIVE ACTION.**

***P30: Oh no I think positive action is necessary. I don't think (..) ah, if you just let things ride you will never uh at least create some semblance of fairness. So I think if an organisation (..) has recognised that there are particular barriers and that people have been left behind, then they owe it to themselves to set some kind of programme for, you know, three to five years or something to say, OK we know that in the past we've not paid much attention to this and therefore you know we need to recognise we've either lost talent. we've got loads of talent stuffed down at the bottom and we want to give people opportunities to attend training to say what they think their needs are, what they think the barriers are, and we'll do our best. Now, when the jobs come up, OK they can apply. So I think there's some need for positive action, otherwise nothing will happen. People, people will just wait for osmosis and you know, that's where the social justice issue to me comes in. You know, I've got about another thirty years of my life let's say (..) if I'm lucky I might live 'til about eighty-five, so I've got thirty-five years or something, so why? Why do I have to wait? You know, that's my fundamental human right to be allowed to you know, develop to my potential. So I think that's for me where the social justice comes in. So there's no point saying, oh it will happen. You play with my life! That is my life, I've only got one! So I think that's a very powerful argument so I say to people if you KNOW that it's been unfair then I think should say. State it and this is why we're doing positive action. I don't think you should do positive discrimination. Organisations I know have done it and I think, a) (..) that if you pick, you know it makes the people get a heart attack! So people like me, you know, you get, oh you're the token woman, or you only got the job because you're a woman or whatever. So I think it makes it harder for the individuals. Equally they've appointed people who are not capable and then they say, well see we knew they couldn't do it, so we'll revert back to the stereotype, anyway people like that don't fit into the organisation. So I think you know...**

***INT: ...THEY MAKE SURE THE FACE DOESN'T FIT BY USING THAT?**

*P30: Yes. Yeah and so one needs to distinguish the positive action from the positive discrimination quite clearly.

*INT: I'M JUST ASKING BECAUSE THERE SEEMS TO BE A LITTLE DUALITY GOING ON. PEOPLE ARE ARGUING FOR MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY BECAUSE THEN THEY CAN MAKE IT APPLY TO EVERYBODY AND THEY'RE NOT TARGETING SPECIFIC GROUPS AND SO IT MOVES IT VERY CLEARLY AWAY FROM POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION. BUT THEN POSITIVE ACTION GETS THROWN INTO IT SOMEHOW AS SOMETHING THAT YOU MUSTN'T DO BECAUSE IT'S NOT AVAILABLE TO EVERYBODY THEN. OR YOU'RE PRETENDING THAT IT'S NOT FOR WOMEN, OR IT'S NOT FOR BLACK PEOPLE, YOU'RE PRETENDING THAT IT'S THERE FOR EVERYBODY BUT ACTUALLY YOU'RE ONLY TALKING ABOUT THESE GROUPS BUT NOT SAYING IT OUT LOUD. I JUST WONDERED...

*P30: ...And I can see, I mean I, I have, well you know I've had to discuss that in organisations and I can see that people find it (..) hard because not all white men have been you know, part of the old boy network and you know, it's been difficult for them. But if you look at it in terms of majority and power and decision making and social justice, they've all had access. The majority of people have. So what we're saying is that in order to close the gap (..) we need to take some positive action to make sure those barriers are removed. And to bring people up to the level playing field. I mean I think, my vision would be that as the gap closes then things like that should be open to all people who need support and development. So I'm not saying it should be exclusive but I think initially in terms of priority (..) that's where you start. You start with the groups who are the furthest behind. And when organisations say to me, we can't do that I said well you've got priorities for everything else, so why can't you have priorities for this? You have priorities for who, what training is important now, who you're going to recruit now, why can't you target people and measure it?

*INT: BUT HOW DO YOU MAKE THAT UH PALATABLE TO THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN LEFT BEHIND, THEN IF YOU SAY IT IN THOSE TERMS?

*P30: Well I mean, you know, you have to explain it why you're doing it and they will not always be pleased but one of the things that I found is that when you ASK people in organisations where they see the unfairness, THEY'RE the ones who say to you, well OK I might be treated badly, but I'm not treated as badly as X, who happens to be a woman, or black, they REALLY have a hard time. And when we've done some cultural audits, um and I've actually interviewed people in a large government department, you know like, I'm talking about messenger level and stuff and they, THEY the messengers were saying, oh, well, you know they really have a hard time, people treat them really badly and, so they notice what's going on.

*INT: YOU SEE THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE THAT I NOTICED FROM MY FIRST SAMPLE IS THAT EVERYBODY CAN SEE IF FOR SOMEBODY ELSE BUT THEY DON'T WANT TO ADMIT THAT IT'S ANY PROBLEM FOR THEMSELVES. IT'S VERY RARE THAT YOU GET SOMEONE SAY I HAVE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, IT TENDS TO BE IN TERMS OF YES, I KNOW IT HAPPENS BUT IT DOESN'T HAPPEN TO ME. SO, THEY DON'T IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH A DISADVANTAGED GROUP, SO THEN IF YOU DESIGN A MEASURE, A POSITIVE ACTION MEASURE, THEY DON'T WANT ANY PART OF IT BECAUSE IT TARGETS THEM, IT MAKES THEM STAND OUT MORE THAN THEY STAND OUT ALREADY.

*P30: Well it does. I mean it does, it does. But in some organisations people, when it's explained, I mean we're doing someone at the moment through MaST and uh you know there's a recognition that they initially said, and this is for black staff, they were saying well, we don't really want to be singled out and we don't want to uh. You know when they start, when we get them to talk about why it's important, they say well yeah, I suppose you're right. In the end we need to examine ourselves and look at how we deal with these issues and whatever and that's how it moves on. But there is resentment and I think it would be unwise to pretend that there's not resentment. Well you do get some people who will align themselves and say, yeah, you know, we may have been discriminated at this level but the discrimination is worse for X.

*INT: YEAH, IT'S JUST THAT NOBODY WANTS TO BE X.

*P30: (..) Well that, that's (..) but some people are prepared to say yeah well hey (..) and if only I'll be given a chance. But it is hard, you know I wouldn't pretend that it's uh, it's sort of easy to do and that there's not a lot of resentment, particularly if an organisation has not explained it properly.

*INT: YEAH, YEAH. SO THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE THAT KEEPS COMING THROUGH TIME AND TIME AGAIN IS THAT SO MUCH OF (..) PROVIDING EQUALITY OR WORKING TOWARDS A FAIR SYSTEM, IS MANAGEMENT, PURE MANAGEMENT. OR SELECTION, OR, YOU KNOW IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT CAN BE SIDELINED AS, THIS IS AN EQUALITY UNIT, THIS IS....

*P30: ...Yes, it's human resource management.

*INT: YEAH. DO YOU THINK THAT KIND OF THING WILL BE DEVOLVED DOWN, YOU KNOW BE TAKEN OUT OF THE DOMAIN OR HR?

*P30: Well I mean some organisations have taken it out and put it in a square box and to me that, I mean they need to have a focus but putting it in a square box, so you can just tick the box, oh I've run the equal opportunities training, that's it. It's not integrated into policy and practice, well I'm sure Michael Howard talked about mainstreaming at the DFE. It's got to be mainstreamed. It's got to be part of a manager's job to MANAGE their staff. And managing means managing a diverse base. It's about ensuring that people are not disadvantaged or unnecessary barriers put in their way. (..) And balancing what the organisation needs, consists of that. What the organisation needs as well, you know it's not one-sided. But I think that you are right and a lot of it is with the managers (..)stuff, probably because they feel afraid and threatened and (..) you know that needs to be recognised as well. When they're seeing women coming through who are smarter and brighter and, they, they always never had to compete before. They never had to compete on an equal basis, you see and they don't like being told that.

*INT: YES!

*P30: So then you say, well actually, let's look at history. I mean by the law of averages if all the men had competed equally then you wouldn't have had so many men here. But they don't like to hear that.

*INT: YEAH. I TEND TO FIND AS WELL IN LARGE ORGANISATIONS PEOPLE WILL, BECAUSE THEY HAVE REACHED A POSITION A CERTAIN WAY, THEY CAN'T UNDERSTAND THAT ANYBODY MIGHT GET THERE A DIFFERENT WAY FROM THEMSELVES AS WELL SO THEY'RE NOT WILLING TO...

*P30: ...That's right, that's right and it's like, oh well I'm know a good, you know, I'm going to mentor this, he's a good lad, you know plays golf with me or whatever. And off we go through the system, ignoring all the rest of the talent who might be even better. And that's how some of it works and I think, you know, people don't like to be reminded of that. Some people tell me about positive discrimination and I say well, it's been in operation for men for a very long time but nobody ever screamed about it, so how come all of a sudden, as soon as women MANAGE to succeed by dint, SHEER dint of hard work, all of a sudden we're talking about positive discrimination! I don't really, I don't understand that, so you tell me about it.

*INT: YEAH. THAT'S A NICE WAY OF PUTTING IT! (LAUGHS) I'VE NOT HEARD OF THAT ONE!

*P30: Well I mean, you know, if you look at, even if you step back and look at it statistically, by the law of averages, (..) it shouldn't have worked like that.

*INT: YEAH. (..) SO WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MAJOR MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYERS NOW TO START DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT? WHAT ATTRACTS EMPLOYERS TO GET IN YOUR AGENCIES OR CONSULTANCIES?

*P30: I mean I think um the enlightened ones, as I said, the ones who are really, who recognise the clear business benefits that accrue from having people that are diverse, well-motivated, holding onto their talent. The global market players, I I think, you know, they don't even think about it, in so many, well I say they don't I mean they still do, but they're much more aware of it. Um I think for some people I think it's the first

tribunal case, as much I hate to say that, I think they suddenly think, oh my god! My image, my reputation! It's going to be damaged. I mean you only have to look at the police service, you know one or two people has ruined it for hundreds and hundreds of good officers. I mean, you know.

***INT: HMM. YOU THINK REPUTATION IS THAT IMPORTANT TO MOST ORGANISATIONS?**

***P30: Oh I think it is. I mean for the, you know, for the private sector, it's, 'why am I going to buy your product if', how long did it take, I mean did you see Perrier? And this is nothing to do with diversity, this is to do with, you remember the benzene scare in the Perrier? How, you know, I don't think they've recaptured their market share at all. It would be interesting to look to see where they are now. I mean, Shell, Nigeria. How often do you shop at a Shell petrol station now?**

***INT: YEAH, IT DOES A LOT OF HARM DOESN'T IT.**

***P30: It does! And I don't know how, I haven't done a survey but on a rough sample, random, of people I know, people don't stop at Shell stations. I know some people still do obviously because they're still open but people still remember. You know and if there's a Shell and an Esso station, I will drive into the Esso station. I mean not that Esso probably doesn't do just as bad things but it wasn't as publicised, so I think image is TREMENDOUSLY important.**

***INT: EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT COMPANIES WHO ARE DEALING DIRECTLY WITH THE PUBLIC?**

***P30: Well I think for that it might be difficult because I, you know, it's difficult to know what they're up to if they're not dealing with the public and if it's not publicised. But I mean if you take the priv, the public sector (..) and if they rely on the public's co-operation, like the police service, then you don't get it. You can't be successful in policing and meeting your statutory responsibilities without the public. So they ruin and damage their reputation and relationship with the public at their own cost. So there is a cost, a business cost.**

*INT: DO YOU THINK THE FLIP SIDE OF REPUTATION UM IS ATTRACTING EMPLOYEES TO THEIR ORGANISATION, DO YOU THINK THAT'S QUITE...

*P30: ...Yeah, well it is. (..) I mean, the police service again as another example. They want, it takes them years of persuasion and they still cannot get ethnic minority representation to the level that they would like. (..) Because even though they're making, and I have to give them credit, they're making great strides to change the culture internally, people say, oh no I don't think I want to go and work for them. Even though it might be just as bad somewhere else, they don't know.

*INT: YEAH. THAT'S AN EXTREME EXAMPLE.

*P30: So it impacts on recruitment, it impacts on customer service, whether public or private sector and internally, OK, so I'll do my job and I want to keep my head down and I'll work for and put up, you know, but I'm not going to put myself out. That's productivity an issue as well.

*INT: DO YOU THINK THERE'S ALWAYS BE THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE THOUGH WHERE REPUTATION WILL BE A STRONG ENOUGH INFLUENCE THAT YOU CAN PICK AND CHOOSE GOOD AND BAD EMPLOYERS?

*P30: Well, even if you can't, what do people do? When it's a down turn, they stick it out and as soon as there's an upturn, they think, goodbye. I mean if you look at, um I don't know whether it's still so in the last couple of years, but up until tow years ago, the majority of businesses were started by women.

*INT: YEAH?

*P30: The highest percentage of self-employment was by women. And when you surveyed them, they were all saying, well we don't have to put up with it. You know, you we don't have to forever you're like climbing and pushing this boulder uphill. We can work more flexibly. We do want to share our family life and our work life. So they start businesses. And they've been most successful.

*INT: YEAH. (..) OK, WELL I JUST WANT TO MOVE ONTO A BIT MORE OF POLICY INFORMATION REALLY AND TO SEE HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE

YOU THINK A POLICY CAN MAKE TO PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOURS AND ATTITUDES.

*P30: Policy, well policy is worth, who was the famous person who said, policy's not worth the paper it's written on, or something, you know, the contract! And I think you know ten years ago, policy used to be a good, oh you've got a policy but I think it was soon seen through that that policy was not translated into action and behaviour. And I think while it's a start to have a policy, the policy is not worth the paper it's written on IF it is not actioned, if it's not monitored, um if people are not accountable. So if a manager in a department doesn't have (..) objectives, or performance management targets that are linked to people management, diversity management, whatever you want to call it, and it's all about bottom line and budget, then I don't think it's going to work. And it doesn't even work. And organisations don't spell out the behaviour. So they talk about all these nice things but they don't say, well we value our people. What does that mean in behaviour? Well it means respect. What does respect mean? It means listening to them, sending them on training, it means selecting them fairly, it means, you know, giving them constructive criticism fairly. That's what it means to me. But those behaviours are not usually defined. So policy (..)

*INT: DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WHO ARE COMMITTED TO EQUALITY, DO YOU THINK THEY'RE AIMING TO CHANGE JUST WORK BEHAVIOURS, LIKE YOU SAY, YOU HAVE TO SPECIFY WHAT'S ACCEPTABLE AND WHAT'S NOT ALMOST, OR DO YOU THINK THAT'S POINTLESS JUST GOING FOR BEHAVIOURS WITHOUT THE ACCOMPANYING ATTITUDE CHANGE OR?

*P30: Yeah, well I mean it's a cyclical thing, isn't it. In work, I mean you can't get in someone's head, you can't tell them what to think. You can raise their awareness by saying, think of how you would feel, think of the implications, particularly in the work environment but in the work environment you deal with behaviours and standards. You know people can think what they like, it's up to them. Hopefully the attitudinal change will follow. Perhaps they'll become more aware and reflect on who they are as human beings. Because it's about being a human being. This is where the social justice stuff comes in. I think in the, in the wider world umm (..) difficult to say you just have to look around and see what's going on (..) around us. And I think governments set

standards and I think this government is setting some standards by making it clear what it will tolerate and what it won't. And I think the previous government didn't set any standards, I think they'll probably send me to the tower for this but I don't think they did! They didn't, you know, the statements of people like Jack Straw have made, you know, David Blunkett, Tony Blair, quite clearly. OK, whether they follow it through is a different thing. And it doesn't necessarily take money. Someone who says oh low resources but it doesn't take money. I mean the fact that human rights legislation is going to be ENACTED. You know, we signed up to this bloody thing fifty years ago, or forty years ago and we still have no access to it in a funny sort of way. We have to go to Europe, for god's sake. The fact that, all of those to me are indicators because equal opportunities, or equality, whatever you want to call it, is about human rights, in the BIGGER sense. In organisations, and where organisations are difference driven but (inaud) a lot of community organisations have got (..) umm community involvement policies because they see the community, whether it's the local, national or global community as their next customers. So if they don't invest in what's going on, they're not going to have any customers come 2205 or whatever.

*INT: IT'S AN ADDED INCENTIVE AS WELL ISN'T IT.

*P30: That's right and and people notice that. You know they will continue to shop in the Marks & Spencers of this world because Marks & Spencers are involved in the community. You know, doing things for them, with them, asking their views, finding out what's going on. And I think that makes a tremendous amount of difference. So that's to me is about equality as well. I mean I don't think, looking at the business ethics, how can you divorce yourself from the community?

*INT: YEAH. WELL THE OTHER THING THAT I'M COMING INTO A LITTLE BIT AS WELL IS THAT THE PRACTITIONERS WORKING IN THE FIELD SEEM TO FALL VERY CLEARLY INTO PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF WHO ARE LOOKING VERY MUCH AT THE LARGER PICTURE, CALL IT DIVERSITY, OR CALL IT HUMAN RIGHTS OR SOCIAL JUSTICE OR WHAT EVER. AND THEN YOU GET THE TRADITIONAL EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAYERS IF YOU LIKE, WHO ARE RACE OFFICERS, OR GENDER OFFICERS, OR YOU KNOW

VERY VERY SPECIFIC AREAS AND WHO SEE IT ENTIRELY AS A DOMAIN AND WON'T LET ANYBODY ELSE IN. DO YOU SEE THAT AT ALL?

*P30: Um I mean um I guess in the public sector, that you know you have sort of race and gender and whatever but uh, I mean you probably do meet some of that it particular (..) in parts of service delivery but I do think that all of the practitioners need to come together because, how can you separate me? You know. I'm a woman, I'm also black. Well, you know, where do I fall. So I think it needs to come together but I can see why people have these specialist areas because some of it is so difficult to deal with um you know, at a grass roots level. That you do need one person who's just going to plug away at it but they do need to understand how it fits into the bigger picture. Because there's no point doing it in a square box. A square box isn't going to make much process.

*INT: SO THIS IS IT, I'VE FOUND, I MEAN OBVIOUSLY I'M INTERVIEWING PEOPLE AS A WHITE WOMAN AND I GET A LOT OF PEOPLE JUST LOOKING AT ME, IT'S LIKE, WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME ABOUT RACE, YOU'RE WHITE? AND YOU AUTOMATICALLY HEAR ONE VERSION FROM THEM AND THEY TELL SOMEONE ELSE A DIFFERENT STORY ALTOGETHER. AND I FIND IT FRUSTRATING REALLY BECAUSE I CAN'T BE EVERYTHING TO EVERYBODY.

*P30: No. But I think that's where the diversity issue comes into it. I mean the fact that you're white I mean doesn't necessarily mean that people don't suffer discrimination because the Irish suffer a tremendous of discrimination and and, you know, for the, white people are included in the Race Relations Act. And that's part of the raising awareness raising thing. Oh, this is all to do with THEM, well who's this bloody them? I don't know who they're talking about. You know it happens to be people who are visible who might, who ARE subjected to more discrimination but you know, the Irish in this country have been terribly discriminated against. Again, tribunals have made some really significant landmark decisions, which have put it on the map. And if you look at the Equal Opportunities Review in terms of tribunal cases, the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish are distinct national groups. So, but people don't know that. They think it's only about black people. And the gender thing, um you know they think oh well it's

black, um it's man or woman and of course transexuality, um or transgender I should say to use the correct term, is now an issue under the Sex Discrimination Act and I hope that soon sexual orientation will be part of it. I mean I know we that can do something about sexual orientation. I don't whether the government's going to act on the Treaty of Amsterdam but if they don't act on the Treaty of Amsterdam then I hope, you know, somebody takes them to the Human Rights Court!

*INT: (INAUD)

P30: Well you know, I mean the officers, MOD officers have already taken them there haven't they but when it comes home, i.e. they bring the rights home, that will uh make a tremendous difference. Because what's it got to do with my sexual orientation, whether I do the job or not?

*INT: YEAH. YEAH. HOW MUCH OF A PROBLEM DO YOU THINK LANGUAGE USE IS AND TERMINOLOGY?

*P30: Um I think it CAN be a problem because people then get hung up on it and use it as a diversionary tactic, in my view. Because if they're talking about respect, then I think language is important. You show me that you respect me by acknowledging that I would like to be described as black, or Asian, or whatever and that I would want to be included. So instead of saying he, he all the time, or she, she all the time, why can't you say he or she or they or us or whatever. So I think it is important because I don't know what you think unless the language reflects it. I can't get in your head. So I think language is important.

*INT: DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR A CENTRAL BODY TO SET SOME STANDARDS OF LANGUAGE OR SOMETHING?

*P30: No that smacks to me like the French, you know these are the French words you will use. No. And I think you know language to me is a dynamic you know and if you described my mother as coloured, she'd probably not even bat an eyelid. If you took, if you described me as coloured I'd be very offended (tape ends)

(new tape starts) but you know and I think it's about, again it's dynamic and other people just want to keep it in a little square box and not look at how the world has changed and the world has changed. You know, people are taking more pride in who they are you know and some you know, you know American (inaud) people of, people of colour, some people still describe themselves as people of colour but people call themselves African-Americans or Italian-American or Chinese-American. In the UK it seems to be such a big fuss to describe yourself as you know, I don't know, black-British or something, 'oh well why can't you just be plain British?' well there's no (..) sense that people have gone through an historical process but I mean, how can, you know, everybody doesn't understand that and THAT'S the kind of awareness thing that people need to be (..) made.

***INT: I THINK THAT'S PART OF THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION AS WELL IS THAT THE UK BASE SEEMS TO BE VERY MUCH 'TICK THIS BOX THAT APPLIES TO YOU' AND I THINK THAT SEEMS TO FRAME A LOT OF PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF THE ISSUES AS WELL.**

***P30: Yeah. And people find it difficult to separate the monitoring aspect. That we need to monitor to see if we're making progress, from the language descriptive. Now that's very subtle and we probably you know need, I don't know, it just needs to be explained! You know because I have the same conversations with black groups who say, 'oh why do we have to tick it?' and I say, well OK (..) do you want to know if progress has been made? Do you want to know where people are in an organisation? So that when we talk as in this organisation is not, is discriminating, and you can't produce the figures? (..) Right, fine, OK. So you know it's not one-sided, it's...**

***INT: ...YES. I HAVE TO SAY FROM INTERVIEWING BLACK PEOPLE FROM MY FIRST STUDY THAT THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE WHO SAID THEY WOULDN'T FILL IN THE BOXES ON MONITORING FORMS OR THEY WOULDN'T SEND THEM BACK BECAUSE OF THE FEAR THAT IT'S GOING TO BE MISUSED.**

***P30: And I can understand that but equally the challenge is, if you don't fill it in, how do you know progress has been made? How do people (..) determine that there's an**

organisation they're making progress and perhaps there is something wrong, because they've got all these black people and nothing's happening. So you take your pick! If you decide you don't want to do it, then you take your chances, it's up to you. So that has to be challenged as well.

***INT: I MEAN THERE'S QUITE A FEW STUDIES WHERE PEOPLE HAVE SENT IN THE SAME APPLICATION WITH DIFFERENT SOUNDING SURNAMES...**

***P30: ...That happens, still happens today. I (..) we were running a series of focus groups with a particular organisation, one of which I (inaud) um where one guy said that's exactly what he did. He kept applying for this job um and decided he was qualified for it and thought, right, OK, I'm going to change my name. The minute he changed his name he got asked for an interview.**

***INT: YEAH, YEAH. I SPOKE TO SOMEONE WHO HAD DONE THAT AS WELL. SHE HAD A VERY...**

***P30: ...So, and that's what I mean about the subtle discrimination. It's no longer, no coloureds, no Irish, no dogs (..) [blows out loudly pulling a disbelieving face!]**

***INT: YEAH, YEAH, BUT WE'LL USE YOUR MONITORING FORMS TO DO THAT FOR YOU IN SOME CASES AS WELL I THINK!**

***P30: Yeah. But I mean, a typical example (..) you can't tell by name (..) so people are always astounded. I mean this morning, a woman came down the stairs, she's looking for me, there's another woman standing there, she went into the reception and say, 'where is she?' (..) because I, I'm not expected. They don't expect, someone like me is probably not this image they have of a consultant. (..) And this, they, that person, if I said that to them would be most shocked. They would not understand what I was saying. But that's what I mean about the subtlety.**

***INT: THEY HADN'T REALISED THEIR OWN STEREOTYPES?**

***P30: Right. There were two of us in reception (..) and there was this quizzical look, hmm, it can't be that one or that one, well you know, um, you know, 'you did say she**

was in reception', 'oh yeah, that's her sitting over there'. And then the look, they walk over, well, you know, I'm not the person that's expected, if they don't know who I am.

*INT: YEAH. (..) THERE'S ANOTHER SIDE, A FLIP SIDE OF EXPECTATION, THAT'S JUST REMINDED ME, THAT WHAT I FOUND A LITTLE BIT IN SOME ORGANISATIONS IS THAT IF A COMPANY IS DOING NOT VERY MUCH TOWARDS EQUALITY, THEN ANYTHING THAT THEY DO CAN BE SEEN AS REMARKABLE BUT THEN IT ALSO FLIPS THE OTHER WAY, SO THAT IF A COMPANY IS, HAS DONE QUITE A LOT, THEN YOU'VE RAISED PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS TO THE LEVEL THAT ANYTHING, SMALL AS IT MAY BE, THAT DOESN'T GO TO PLAN, IS PICKED UP ON AND PEOPLE WILL SAY (..). SATISFACTION IS HOW IT ALL TIED IN FOR ME. AS FAR AS THE BUSINESS CASE IS CONCERNED, IF YOU TREAT PEOPLE FAIRLY AND EQUALLY, THEN IT'S SUPPOSED TO IMPROVE THE SATISFACTION, THE PRODUCTIVITY, THE COMMITMENT, REDUCE YOUR ATTRITION LEVELS, ALL THE REST OF IT. AND YET IF YOU ARE DOING SO MANY THINGS THEN YOU RAISE THEN YOU RAISE THE EXPECTATIONS SO THAT PEOPLE AREN'T AS SATISFIED WITH WHAT'S GOING ON BECAUSE THEY EXPECT MORE.

*P30: Possibility.

*INT: YEAH?

*P30: Possibility. Uh, I think it's probably very difficult to separate that from the fact that people are suddenly thinking, 'oh they're taking me seriously. And you know they've raised the standard and I'll make more demands'. I don't think, I don't think you can separate it. You know if you expect low standards then you don't say anything do you? I mean, you know, if I go to certain places I think well I know what I'm going to get, so what's the point? So even when I do get something, I just think, oh well, there's a one-off. Whereas if I go to, again let's come back to, if I go to Marks & Spencer's, I expect nothing but the best (..) because that's what they tell me I'm going to get. They publicise it, they put into practice, when you take something back, they don't even bat an eyelid. Therefore, if the slightest thing goes wrong with Marks &

Spencer's for me, the negative is I will complain and not accept it, as I might somewhere else, but equally, um they live up to that promise because if I do say something about it, they are immediately, 'we're so sorry, you should have come back to us immediately, but here we are, we'll do our best to sort it out'. So they live up to their promise. It can only be good for them because their reputation is so firmly entrenched that if they ever had one major disaster (..) MOST people will forgive them. Most people will forgive them. I'd be willing to take a bet and I'm not a marketer. I think people go, 'oh but that's SO unlike them. That must have been a mistake.' Whereas, if it was someone else, they'd go, 'well, you know, that's what we thought'.

***INT: YEAH AND THAT'S AN UNSPOKEN BENEFIT OF THE BUSINESS CASE AS WELL REALLY.**

***P30: Absolutely and and, I think organisations like that recognise some of that.**

***INT: YEAH. OK, SO ANOTHER SIDE OF IT, FOR MY STUDY POINT, IS IN TERMS OF ATTRITION LEVELS. IF YOU ARE WORKING TOWARDS ALL OF THESE MARVELLOUS THINGS AND RIGHTS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES, THEN YOU DO REDUCE YOUR ATTRITION LEVELS, AND IT WORKS, YOU RETAIN PEOPLE FOR LONGER, SO YOU HAVE THE TRAINING BENEFITS, THE COSTS ARE REDUCED. BUT THEN THERE'S ALSO A PROBLEM OF, YOU RETAIN PEOPLE SO THEN YOU DON'T GET THE NEW BLOOD COMING IN...**

***P30: ...You stay too long.**

***INT: YEAH. HOW DO YOU THEN GET RID OF THE DEAD WOOD AND GET NEW IDEAS IN?**

***P30: Well I think you, you, you can't separate again that from the external, the market, the external market. Um and you can't separate that from, again it's dynamics of an organisation. An organisation changes and grows or whatever, whatever word you want, change. To use my favourite guru Tom Peters, change is constant. You know people who can't manage to live with change, forget it. So I think there are two things there, one is that the issue about rights. With rights come responsibilities and people always talk about 'my right' but they forget about the other side, you know that**

is a two-way process. But I think as organisations change, as the market outside changes, then people will either outgrow the organisation, or the organisation will outgrow them. And if people's capacity cannot be developed within an organisation, then it might be slower to get rid of them but (..) I mean you will. So I, you know, I think you can't just look at one dynamic that all these people will stay with you, but I think that would be really great but it doesn't quite work like that. But what you will get is a longer pay back (..) on your investment. So I might not stay with you for my fifty years until I retire but I will stay, instead of staying with you five years, I might stay with you ten years. So you get a payback period but you know where, so after my first five years and I'm really up and running in a job, you'll get the added value. I mean I'm using, just throwing numbers around but the principle is what I'm talking about. So I think there's, there is something in that as well. Um I think where organisations are not very fair, people hang on, they get all sorts of people who they're afraid to sack, because they will just claim discrimination, and they're not doing their business any good! Whereas if they're fair and they sack people, for example, then they get rid of some of the dead wood like that. No, not the dead wood, because I think it's unfair, everybody has got their own little niche, but I've outgrown the organisation, you know, I'm not able to perform any more. And I'm not talking about people who might need um you know, standard training, because we all need, you know we can do something new, we want some support or whatever. I'm talking about the people who, 'this is where I want to stay, the organisation no longer has this kind of operation for me, I don't want to move, well I'll go somewhere else.' Or. 'I'm not performing, I'm either too lazy or they made a bad hire,' or, because they'll still make bad hires, so they'll have to get rid of people. So, you know, I don't think it's a one-off situation, you know, if you look at your graduate population, they're bringing in new blood, you know, and people go off and do things, I think.

*INT: NO I WAS THINKING OF [ORGANISATION NAME] IN PARTICULAR WHERE THEY'VE HAD...

*P30: ...(inaud) got the equal opportunities there?

*INT: YEAH, THEY'VE GOT ASPIRATION STATEMENTS AND DIVERSITY THIS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY THE OTHER, AND THEY HAVE GOT VERY

VERY LOW TURNOVER LEVELS, TO THE POINT THAT IN THEIR UK HEAD
QUARTERS THEY'VE GOT MAYBE TWO OR THREE PEOPLE UNDER THE
AGE OF TWENTY-FIVE AND THEY'RE DESPERATE TO RECRUIT MORE
YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE ORGANISATION BUT THEY DON'T HAVE THE
VACANCIES FOR THEM BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT EXPANDING AT THAT
RATE...

*P30: Well they should just change their retirement policy! They should give people
career breaks like IBM used to do.

*INT: YEAH?

P30: You get a compulsory career break, or you used to in IBM, they probably can't
afford it any more, since they went through that crisis, after X years of service you had
to have, I think you were paid pro rata and you had to go off and do something else.

*INT: REALLY?

*P30: Yeah. I don't know whether it was in the UK but they did this in America.

*INT: OH RIGHT. AND THEY DID THAT WHY, TO COUNTERACT THAT
EFFECT?

*P30: Well again, you know, people have been here so long they become like this
clone, and they wanted, they had to go off and do something different.

*INT: WHAT A LOVELY IDEA! (LAUGHS)

*P30: Well I think so too, but then that's creative (..) thing I mean it, and I don't know
(..) I mean, I haven't, the guy who used to be at [organisation name], umm the personnel
director, I can't remember his name, um and I don't know even if he's still there, a guy
with a beard?

*INT: I DON'T KNOW.

*P30: Oh right, because, well, um but I'm sure again it's about looking at creative ways
around it. (..) Well people will stay longer, because they feel fairly treated and they'll

be willing to more, to put themselves out. I mean I don't know what productivity is like and I don't know what, you know, what their profit margin is. But if they're making jeans and it's very profitable. (..) You know, a pair of jeans is a pair of jeans, what they thinking of? You know making a different style of [organisation name]? It will be the same.

***INT: YEAH. THEY WERE HOPING THEY WOULD GET SOMEONE TO CREATE A NEW 501 FOR THEM BUT THEY HAD THE SAME OLD STAFF THAT WEREN'T COMING UP WITH NEW IDEAS.**

***P30: Yeah but then you see you hire in consultants for it. You know, so the world is changing and there are ways around it. So OK, so you send your consultants off to somewhere really exciting, you bring in a new bunch of people to work with them and get them to stretch their creativity.**

***INT: SO YOU DON'T SEE THAT THERE'S A PROBLEM?**

***P30: No, well I think it's about creative ways around it. I, I don't think, I mean I think it would really worry me if people um, you're right, if people had just stagnated but then I'd want to know why they're stagnating. (..) You know is it because they've reached burn out because they're, you know, whatever? You don't have to stagnate. You know I could give up now, I could retire now. I'm you know, ten years time I'll be collecting my pension but you know, I've started a PhD. People say, 'why have you started a PhD?' oh well you know, just keeping the brain, but I think some of that is to do with self-motivation and um whatever. So I think it's possible and I think organisations who enable people to do that by saying, OK, you're going to be here but some of the things we're going to stretch you to do, you know, when you've done fifteen years worth, we want you to go off and do this, you know or do this, or do this, or do this, or take you off somewhere and put you in a creative dream or something, I don't know!**

***INT: (LAUGHS)**

***P30: I don't know, ask me when I'm a, when I'm a proper psychologist!**

***INT: (LAUGHS) WELL I HOPE A PHD DOES THAT FOR YOU! (LAUGHS).**

***P30: (laughs) Yeah I know, yeah, I'll do it for them, I might as well do it now! But they won't believe me, they'll hire some, you know, person who, who has probably got a PhD but who's probably not half as good at it as I am!**

***INT: ABSOLUTELY!**

***INTERVIEWER & PARTICIPANT DISCUSS THEIR PhDs.**

***INT: WELL I THINK I'VE EXHAUSTED EVERYTHING THAT I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT, IS THERE ANYTHING I'VE NEGLECTED TO ASK THAT YOU THINK I SHOULD HAVE?**

***P30: Um, I mean you're really focussed on the business case aren't you?**

***INT: YEAH.**

***P30: Yeah and I think, you know, if I were to argue for the business case, which I would do, in (..) organisational terms, I think that it's quite clear that there are benefits, quite quite clear. I think there are also some challenges because managing visible and invisible diversity is not easy. Um particularly with the way management training, or management in the UK is viewed, not in all organisations, again, I know we're talking generalities. Um that people spend more of their time managing technical aspects than they do managing people when their job should be about managing people eighty percent of the time and getting the best from them and I think that is a critical issue. And it's not just that you know that the commitment comes down from the top, it's that also middle managers don't know what, what to do and how to do it. You know and people who develop them and give them the skills find that they will manage much better. So I think that's one of the challenges, to get managers trained and also that managers can't determine the difference between managing and leading. And you know if you're going to lead people, (..) and manage them, which is what a manager has to do, lead and manage, then they can't do it. So all the edicts might come down but if they're not given the skills, they don't understand the standards and behaviours (..) but if organisations are serious about global competition then you know they're going to**

find themselves fighting back. I mean OK there's been a temporary set back because the Far East market you know, banks collapsed but they're going to regroup and they're going to fight again and you know, the competition is going to be just like it was.

***INT: I'M FINDING AS WELL THAT I COULD COME UP WITH REALLY QUITE A CYNICAL RESULT FROM ALL THIS, THAT IT'S NOT SO MUCH WHAT A COMPANY IS DOING BUT VERY MUCH WHAT IT'S SEEN TO BE DOING. SO IT'S, WE'RE NOT TALKING ACTUALITIES, WE'RE TALKING OF PERCEPTION OF. SO IF YOU COULD MANAGE PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS EFFECTIVELY, IT'S ALMOST IRRELEVANT WHAT YOU'RE ACTUALLY DOING.**

***P30: Hmm. I think the population is smarter now. Or as, or as my uh marketing professor at Harvard would say, the rats are smarter. And I think that's one of the challenges because no longer can you go round, you know like ten years ago, 'oh well we've got a policy', people are saying, 'oh really? You've got a policy and this is what's happening to me?' People are not lying down any more. If you look at the rise in tribunal cases. If you look at the fact that people are more willing to, not just sit back and take it anymore. I think it's going to be harder to manage the perceptions. The perception's going to have to be (..) I know people say that perception is reality but people are quite concrete about their reality, I think. When it comes to stuff like that **THEY KNOW** and they're not. Most people, unless they're in very small organisations, or (..) they're not very articulate or whatever, and even if they are, they bitch about is outside. So there's a hidden cost that people don't recognise. So all those black police officers who got out and tell their mates, 'OK we've joined but if I were you, I wouldn't join'. So it makes recruitment harder. So when it comes to resource power, they can't get people.**

***INT: HMM, DESPITE THEIR BEST INTENTION.**

***P30: Precisely. So I think, you know, organisations look at the obvious but they don't look at the knock-on sometimes. And it's the, it's not just this thing about image, it's not so much the image, it's all the practicalities. Like recruiting. It's all the, 'oh my god, if I do this, somebody's going to take me to tribunal', and the tribunal's likely to**

believe them because the reputation is that this is what happens in this organisation. So you can manage the perceptions only for a short while before people begin to ask questions, both internally and externally. And I think of things like business ethics (..) come more and more into the fore because that's one of the new shifts that's coming onto organisation (..) um the organisational debate. You know people are getting smarter as well. So I don't think you could

***INT: YOU COULDN'T DO IT THEN?**

***P30:** You can't separate, you know it's not, if you look at it as a single dimension you can go oh yes, if we manage the perceptions. But then when people start calling in the cheques and you can't deliver, the disillusionment sets in, reality then wakes up and they just go, sorry too bad.

PHONE RINGS AND INTERVIEW WAS CONCLUDED.