

1 Introduction

Race relations training

This is the report of a research project set up to take stock of the provision of employee race relations training and to establish the extent to which it meets current needs. The study included all types of employer in both public and private sectors. Our research work therefore took us to manufacturing firms, local authorities, banks and building societies, government departments, charities, voluntary organisations and a variety of other organisations, all of whom have been involved in some way with employee training in the area of race relations. As the report makes clear, the term race relations training is an umbrella term for a large variety of activities. Often it is provided as part of a wider programme on equal opportunities and is termed equal opportunities training. In practice there is no consensus on what should be called race relations training and what should be called equal opportunities training, and we have therefore not attempted to impose strict definitions of our own. The scope of this report includes training that goes beyond issues of race equality, but race equality issues are its starting point and we do not cover training that is exclusively concerned with other equality issues.

The PSI study

The research work for the PSI study comprised four elements:

- (1) A review of the literature on race relations training and closely related subjects. This forms the next chapter of the report, and a bibliography is appended.
 - (2) A round of 95 interviews with providers of race relations training and with 15 interviews with representatives of prominent organisations interested in race equality.
 - (3) A round of 87 interviews with representatives of organisations where race relations training had been organised for employees.
 - (4) A telephone survey of a general sample of 125 large firms.
- All of the interviews were carried out in 1988 and 1989.

The interviews for parts (2) and (3) were intended to obtain the views of providers on the one hand and of consumers on the other. In practice, the training world does not divide so easily in this way. A number of large organisations arrange their own equal opportunities training in-house, and therefore cannot be simply classified as one or the other. Even where independent trainers come into an organisation, the in-house trainers sometimes assist with the course. In some cases organisations are providers of training to others, but have themselves had training from outsiders. In the end the classification we use is not as important as the substance of what people had to say, and there is some value in the fact that a number of informants had a perspective from both sides of the fence.

Interviews with providers

In this phase of the project we carried out interviews with two main groups of people. The first group comprised providers of training, many of whom were freelance trainers or groups of trainers operating as independent companies, although some others (such as the Department of Employment Race Relations Employment Advisory Service (RREAS), the Industrial Language Training (ILT) units and trainers in the trade union movement) were wholly or partly funded by public bodies or by parent bodies. The second group was a mixture of people from organisations that were involved with race training mainly at arm's length, or were generally important in the area of race relations and equal opportunities. As with the distinction between providers and consumers, there are some problems of definition: some of the organisations we approached for a general view turned out to be providing some actual training.

We built up a list of providers of training from a number of sources: some people and organisations were already known to us professionally; the Local Government Training Board (LGTB) published a directory of individuals and organisations offering training, and from this we extracted the names of those working in the field of race and equal opportunities; discussions with contacts at the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and the Local Authorities Race Relations Information Exchange (LARRIE) added more names, as did our monitoring of course advertisements; and during all our interviews in this phase of the project we sought information on trainers that we might otherwise have missed. We are confident that

few organisations offering training specifically in this field escaped our notice.

Most of the names of the list were to be found in or around the geographical areas chosen for emphasis in the third phase of the project, and we therefore decided to concentrate on those areas: London (and its surrounding counties), the East and West Midlands, and West Yorkshire. This emphasis was not applied rigidly, however, and we went elsewhere to see trainers whom we considered to be particularly interesting. We approached all the organisations on our list in the appropriate areas; there were few refusals, although some interviews were difficult to achieve because of trainers' very full diaries.

In most cases the interviews with trainers were with individuals, (individual freelance trainers or representatives of organisations) but in some cases we had discussions with groups of people from organisations; occasionally these were convened as ad-hoc seminars. Generally the response from the trainers was good, and some helped us a great deal. The initial reactions were sometimes cautious, but careful explanation of the purpose of the project and assurances of confidentiality usually secured co-operation. Often the main concern of trainers was to know whether we understood the background issues of racism and discrimination. The interviews mostly lasted between one and two-and-a-half hours; a few were shorter and a few were much longer. Some trainers were keen to talk for a long time, occasionally over more than one meeting.

In all the total number of people whom we interviewed on the provision side was 95, and the total number of people 'at arm's length', who provided no training, was 15. These figures exclude the people we spoke to in local authorities, whom we included in part (3) of the study, described below.

Interviews with consumers

Using several methods we built up a list of organisations in the study areas (London, the East and West Midlands, and West Yorkshire) that had arranged race relations training for their staff. First we approached a number of local authorities that we knew, from previous contacts and publicly available information, to have mounted training in equal opportunities. Then we asked the appropriate informants from the providers survey for lists of past clients; few refused on

principle, and although obtaining the actual lists was difficult in practice, we did eventually receive a substantial number of names of organisations in this way. Then we approached a further group of organisations we knew to have made some effort on equal opportunities training, using information from our own professional contacts and attendance at various meetings and seminars. Our main objective in putting together the sample of organisations for this part of the study was breadth of experience and sector. It was easy to find public sector organisations where there had been training, but much harder in the private sector. The final sample contained a good variety of organisations from all sectors.

In this part of the study we interviewed 87 people from about 70 organisations; we say 'about 70' because a small number of the organisations were related to each other (as subsidiaries, for instance) and cannot strictly be said to be separate organisations, even though they do have rather different experiences of equal opportunities training.

The telephone survey of large firms

The purpose of the telephone survey was to contact a random sample of large private sector employers to discover whether they were engaged in any training in race relations or equal opportunities, and to gather other information about their staff training needs. We used a sample generated from a commercial database of business records collected direct from companies and from information kept at Companies House. We selected organisations that employed at least 100 people and were in the same geographical areas as our interviews with trainers and consumers.

We restricted the sample to large companies because we did not expect many small companies to be actively pursuing equal opportunities strategies, and thought they would be very unlikely to have any related training. As small firms make up the vast majority of companies, the survey would have shown very little indeed had we not imposed this lower size limit.

We completed 125 telephone interviews (a response rate of 66 per cent). The interviews lasted between five minutes and twenty minutes. The interview schedule is shown at the end of the report.