

Summary

1 Introduction

This research project aimed to take stock of the provision of race relations training and to establish the extent to which it meets current needs. The research comprised four elements: a review of the literature on race relations training and closely related subjects; interviews with providers of race relations training and with representatives of prominent organisations interested in race equality; interviews with representatives of organisations where there had been race relations training; and a telephone survey of a general sample of large firms, to discover whether they were engaged in any race relations or equal opportunities training and to gather other information about their staff training needs. There were 197 informants in the interview surveys and 125 informants in the telephone survey. The research included all types of employer in the public and private sectors, and concentrated on London (and its surrounding counties), the East and West Midlands, and West Yorkshire.

2 Review of the literature

The literature review is concerned with employee training relating to race relations in Britain over the last 20 years. The first section summarises the six best overviews of the subject (Peppard 1980, McIlroy 1981, Shaw 1982, Peppard 1983, Lee 1987 and Commission for Racial Equality 1987) and the second section discusses some of the more important themes and issues of the literature.

Themes and issues

Aims: It is useful to make a distinction between long-term and short-term aims; between training to reduce discrimination and positive action training; and between training for service delivery and for employment. There seems to be no disagreement about the overall

aim of reducing discrimination and disadvantage suffered by minority ethnic groups, but the shorter-term objectives have varied a great deal.

The various short-term aims can be listed as: imparting cultural information to prevent misunderstandings at work; imparting cultural information to enable service delivery staff to take account of different ethnic groups needs; making people aware of the history and mechanisms of racism and discrimination, and helping them to develop strategies to oppose racial injustice; making people aware of racism underlying their own attitudes and behaviour, and helping them to develop strategies to deal with it; uncovering racist attitudes and trying to change them; developing skills and work practices designed to stop discrimination in personnel management; developing skills and practices designed to stop discrimination in service delivery; explaining the meaning of an organisation's equal opportunities programme and the duties that it puts on individuals; explaining the race relations legislation and its implications for the organisation and for the individual.

The literature reveals a trend in the race training field, beginning with an emphasis on cultural and legal information, moving through a period of interest in changing employees' attitudes, and then to a period of emphasis on procedures and duties. Throughout there is an argument about whether it is best to attempt changes in attitudes or changes in behaviour.

Needs and Evaluation: Authors stress the importance of tailoring training to the needs of organisations, and of examining the results of training. Evaluation is acknowledged to be difficult, because it is hard to separate the effects of training from those of other equal opportunities measures. Typically, post-course questionnaires have been used to judge the impact of training.

Racism Awareness Training: This subject has generated a great deal of discussion. Our account takes as its starting point the 'White Awareness' programme designed in the USA by Judy Katz. Emphasising individual change, the programme of exercises tackles the contradiction between people's words and actions, and the gap between constitutional ideals and the reality of racism. Katz's programme influenced developments in Britain in the early 1980s but soon attracted criticism from the political left, from the media, and from others working in race relations using different methods. From trainers, most of the criticism related to the unproven link between the

'conversion' of individual attitudes and changes in organisational practice. Despite the apparent retreat of RAT after these debates, it appears that its more useful elements have been incorporated into the eclectic body of methods and ideas used by trainers.

Practical issues

Levels of staff: training has embraced a growing spectrum of staff as the cultural awareness perspective has given way to an emphasis on discrimination, and as the focus has widened to cover employment as well as service delivery. *Relationship with other training:* the impression is that race relations training owes little to other types of training for its theory and methods, but it may simply be an unacknowledged debt. As regards integration with organisations' other training programmes, the balance seems to favour stand-alone courses. *Techniques:* exercises, discussions and workshops now form the backbone of training methods, although there is more substantive learning content than might be expected from this description. *Organisational context:* training approaches are more successful when they are rooted in the professional and social worlds of the trainees. Race relations training also needs to be part of a larger process of change in an organisation. The importance of individual follow-up after the courses is also emphasised.

3 Equal opportunities, business efficiency and training

Different organisations, different approaches

During the interviews we found a considerable variety of approaches to race relations and equal opportunities training. In most organisations the training has emerged from a general management effort against discrimination, beginning with an equal opportunities policy of some sort. It is helpful to recognise a dichotomy between justice-oriented approaches and efficiency-oriented approaches: it is clear that some organisations have started from a formal political commitment while others have been strongly influenced by fears of recruitment shortages and doubts about ethnic minority markets.

Demand in different sectors

It is clear from our interviews with trainers that up to now the majority of paying customers have been in the public sector and the voluntary sector.

Most of the private-sector firms with a strong equality effort are well known and our research has not extended the list a great deal. A number of large employers with a history of equal opportunities considerations in their employment practices have been joined by others, principally in the financial sector and the media. The telephone survey was carried out in order to give some indications of the mood among a more general sample of larger private sector employers. It revealed very little specific training on race relations, although there is a fairly widespread recognition that good personnel practices require a training input with equal opportunities as part of it.

In the private sector the existence of equal opportunities policies and equal opportunities training seems to be strongly related to the size of firms. Both the interviews and the telephone survey showed that they were found more often in larger firms.

Why do organisations seek equal opportunities training?

In very simple terms, organisations are seeking one or more of the following results from race relations training: to get equal opportunities change moving; to give a signal that things are moving; to develop a strategy; to win over key staff; or to deliver technical advice, information and skills.

Who takes the decisions?

Usually the overall equal opportunities policy is established at a high level within an organisation but the real choices about training are taken at lower levels, by personnel managers, departmental management, special working parties or outside consultants. In the private sector, the equal opportunities training is usually organised by a manager in the training or personnel department. Some firms have appointed an equal opportunities manager with responsibility for training in this area. In local authorities the situation is similar to that in the private sector, although managers and units with special responsibility for equal opportunities are more common. High-level decisions about equal opportunities tend to have a more detailed content in local authorities.

In the charitable and voluntary sector the decisions over equal opportunities matters, including training, tend to be taken at directorial or managing council level, but also involve consultation with staff.

The importance of general training arrangements

Nearly all of the organisations with equal opportunities training already had substantial general training programmes for their staff.

Organisational change and individual duties

Some organisations use training to facilitate the development of policy for equality, while others use it to equip individual staff to do their jobs better. Voluntary and charitable bodies tend to start with training aimed at substantial organisational overhaul.

Initial training efforts tend to concern awareness or general concepts of equal opportunity, and concentrate on senior staff or middle-grade staff, while training later turns to more practical issues such as recruitment and selection, and for staff at lower levels. In all sectors the training for staff comprises a mixture of duty-oriented and discretion-oriented content, the balance between the two often depending on the nature of the organisation and the job in question.

4 Provision of race related training

Race relations training has been provided through a number of different channels. They can be grouped as follows:

- (i) Publicly-funded services: Race Relations Employment Advisory Service; Industrial Language Training Units; Commission for Racial Equality; Race Equality Councils; other publicly funded training services.
- (ii) Independents: independent training consultancies; independent freelance trainers.
- (iii) Associations: public employers' organisations; professional associations.
- (iv) Labour movement: TUC; individual trade unions.
- (v) In-house: organisations' own internal training sections.

Training courses on the market

Some courses are arranged for staff of a single organisation and others are open to people from more than one. The diversity of 'courses' should not be underestimated. Within this diversity it is hard to judge in what form the largest volume of race relations training has taken place – but our work suggests that courses in fair recruitment and selection take precedence, followed by those on equality of service delivery.

Training for equality

The most common length of the discrete courses on recruitment and selection, or on awareness, is two to three days, although one-day courses are not uncommon. Courses extending beyond a week are rare, although some are broken up into sections over several months adding to more than a week in total.

Training and equal opportunities consultancy

Most of the providers feel that it is important to combine their equal opportunities training with other organisational development work and other staff development work.

Course design and assessing training needs

Most trainers like to spend some time studying an organisation before recommending a training course and other measures. In some cases this assessment is possible, where an employer accepts the value of the exercise and resources are available. Trainers said that most organisations do not have the level of commitment required for this. Typically, trainers instead have an initial meeting with a manager or personnel officer, then another after a more detailed training plan has been developed, and perhaps one or two other meetings with key staff.

Costs

RREAS make no charges for their services. The CRE and the RECs do a small amount of training work within single organisations, and have no fixed charging policy. Most of the independents explained that they charge a daily rate per trainer; often the actual rate is negotiable. For the majority of trainers, daily rates per trainer in the public sector were between £200 and £300; a small number, however, started at £500 or more per trainer (these are all 1988 prices). The top end of the scale was, for the majority of trainers, less than £600 per day. For open courses there was a charge per trainee, and again we found a wide range, from under £40 per day to over £150 per day.

The implications of different funding arrangements

The fact that organisations are comparatively reluctant to pay for extensive consultancy in the run-up to training means that publicly funded and grant funded trainers have had greater flexibility than independent trainers; background funding permits a greater input of non-training hours.

Networks and individuals

It would be wrong to visualise the independent sector of training provision as being neatly made up of consultancies with permanent full-time staff, operating independently of and in competition with individual freelance trainers. The consultancies tend to employ people who themselves do freelance work or who have permanent part-time jobs elsewhere.

Marketing

The consensus among the independent trainers is that standard advertising methods have little effect. Most business comes by recommendation or by repeat orders.

Selecting trainers

Organisations seeking training have to rely on a variety of formal and informal sources of information. The most common starting point is enquiry among professional contacts. Over half the consumers considered more than one provider before taking them on. In the private sector, our informants suggested that the financial arguments about equal opportunities training centred on its contribution to saving money, rather than worries about its cost. Some, however, commented that one factor that made RREAS attractive was the fact that their services are free.

The training effort

The main areas covered by the courses have been: general equal opportunities concepts and strategies of change; awareness of racism and discrimination; fair recruitment and selection; personnel policy and practice; ethnic monitoring principles and procedures; and equality in public service delivery. Common to most courses is an attempt to give a conceptual framework and language to deal with the ideas of racism, discrimination and equality of opportunity. Most of the race relations employment training has been among managers, supervisors and personnel staff. Training with a service delivery emphasis has more often taken in staff from lower levels.

What is available?

The array of available courses for race relations training does not represent a plethora of different approaches to the same objective;

Training for equality

rather, it reflects the variety of aims which training is employed to pursue. Trainers tend to offer a range of services but also have their own specialisms.

Content of typical courses

Despite the variety of training available, there is a surprising degree of convergence of course content for each training objective. To illustrate this, the report lists a typical programme for each of three types of training: recruitment and selection, company equal opportunities policy, and general anti-discrimination and equal opportunity practices for service providers.

Training methods

Most equal opportunities training is now based on a mixture of methods, with an emphasis on the value of group work and self-discovery. Courses tend to be based on groups of eight to fifteen trainees, most commonly with two trainers. Different courses are run for different levels of staff.

Many of the trainers use video films to trigger some of the discussions, but they play down the importance of the content of particular videos. Consumers of equal opportunities training seem to give a higher value to video content. Collections of written training materials are built up by individual trainers and agencies. Trainers again play down the importance of the content, saying that they are just props to facilitate interpersonal processes.

Most of the trainers we spoke to felt that courses are more effective if an ethnic minority trainer is involved, although many spoke of the pitfall of setting minority trainers the impossible task of representing black people to the course.

All the trainers said they sometimes encounter difficulties with course participants. The sensitivity of the subject matter means that individuals and groups can feel threatened and respond disruptively. In general, however, trainers say these problems are not serious obstacles to achieving training objectives.

5 Measuring outcomes

Many trainers and clients suggested that the training in which they were involved had not been 'properly' evaluated. Their view was that direct evaluation is feasible but they have been unable to do it; we

argue in this chapter that, on the contrary, direct evaluation is not feasible, but the evaluation tools already in use are of value. It is practicable to evaluate the extent to which particular training courses achieve some of their short-term aims, but not their long-term equality outcomes; and it is practicable to evaluate outcomes of overall equal opportunity programmes, but not the special contribution that the training makes to these.

The contribution of individual trainers

As with any course that relies on people to engage with participants on difficult issues, success is dependent on the skills, experience and abilities of the trainers.

External and internal trainers

The jolt that training can give to an organisation is more effective, according to some informants, if the trainers are from outside. However, outside trainers do sometimes have problems of unfamiliarity with the organisation.

Clients' appraisal of the training

The difficulties of direct evaluation mean that it is hard to give exact answers about the contribution of training to the equality efforts of the organisations we visited, but it is our strong impression that the training has, in the majority of cases, had a beneficial outcome in terms of the development and implementation of equal opportunity programmes. There were few examples of training going badly wrong, and in those cases other training measures were taken to put matters right.

Indicators of overall equality performance of organisations were mentioned by informants as showing, at least in part, the effect of training. Some informants made less specific comments about the improvements that race relations training have led to. For voluntary and community organisations, and to some extent in local authority departments, one result of race-related training seems to be a change in their dealings with white clients: staff are more likely to make a stand against racial abuse, harassment and exclusion. Sometimes another result of race related training and associated programmes is a heightened sense of identity among ethnic minority employees.

6 Aiming for equality

Training and organisational change

'Race relations and equal opportunities training' refers not to a single type of employee training but embraces a wide range of activities. The diversity of training packages reflects a real diversity of needs and training aims; this analysis stands in contrast to the view that the diversity of training results from a confused set of approaches to a single training aim.

Establishing training aims

In practice, the process by which organisations choose from the options has not been uniform, but we can see regularities within different categories of organisation, sometimes resulting from the direction of pressure for change, and sometimes in line with the nature of the client organisation or department.

The training aims must rest on an assessment of two things: first, the present shortcomings of equality performance, and second, the changes necessary to improve that performance. Depending on these assessments, a 'training' programme can be established with the right balance of organisational development, consultancy, high-level workshops, and staff training of different types.

In the main, organisations are satisfied with the quality of training, but there have been problems when the training objectives have been unclear or simply wrong for the organisation, and when training is expected to carry the entire burden of change. The important question is not whether equal opportunities training as such is any good, but this: what types of training are necessary and appropriate?

Promoting investment in equal opportunities

Another practical issue is the relationship between what an organisation needs and what it is prepared to do. In the private sector we were told repeatedly that a business reason is required, and that a simple argument about justice has little effect. Many said that they were prompted to think about their recruitment procedures by a shortage or by the fear of shortages to come. Another business-oriented motivation for equality measures is the realisation of ethnic minority markets. Some employers are also concerned to avoid trouble with the Race Relations Act.

The larger companies that have set out to improve their equality performance do say that 'public image' is one of the factors that prompted them, and that a momentum develops in a particular industry. Responsibility for the growth of that momentum rests both in the organisations that have made some progress already, and among those who can convince employers of the business advantages of equal opportunities change and of the need for fairness and justice.