

Information provide by the Fire Brigades Union to CLG Select Committee

24 February 2010

Specific Examples of End User Requirements not being met by FiReControl

3. Matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment

Terms and Conditions

The FBU can broadly support the recommendations, however not without some qualification. These being:

1. the report concludes (page 9)

Even if a gender equality impact assessment had been undertaken at the earliest possible stage, it is unlikely that the potential adverse gender impact identified would have altered the course of the project. CLG would have needed to balance the requirement to improve national resilience and enhance the capability of fire control against the potential equality impacts identified.

The issue of whether FireControl will/could provide improved national resilience and enhanced capability aside, the fact that it is intended that staff will be removed from their current employer (on transfer) and be placed on transferred terms and conditions which are vulnerable to change will mean that these workers - predominantly women- face the prospect of worsening conditions including pay. This was made clear to us by a ex-Chair of the West Midlands LACC who publicised the fact that the intention of the proponents of the RCC project was to slash costs by changing pay rates to those in call centres as soon as is practicably possible - which are approximately 50% less than current salaries. This could be avoided if staff were employed by application of the staff retention model commonly used in the NHS.

2. the report encourages changes to shift patterns. The current shift patterns which should transfer are widely regarded by staff as being satisfactory.

RCC Building Design Specification

In December 2009 CLG published an Equality Impact Assessment for the Project. In relation to the Buildings this highlighted for example: EIA - para 3.7.2 Concludes that an Access Defect Rectification Plan is implemented by

CLG. This is in response to the realisation that 8 out of 9 RCC buildings do not conform to the DDA in relation to access, door switches/swipes and hearing induction loops etc. CLG were given a blank piece of paper at design stage and the Department's persistent failures in managing the Project included a failure to oversee these points in the first 8 buildings blaming contractors for interpreting the act wrongly! Only London RCC escaped as it had not yet been completed .

Recommendations

- 3.7.1. That immediate steps are taken to ensure the required access standards are met first time in the construction of the London Regional Control Centre.
- 3.7.2. That the access defect rectification plan is implemented by CLG.
- 3.7.3. That the local authority controlled companies designate the rooms to be used as meeting and training rooms and consider either installing permanent inductive loop systems in those rooms, or purchasing a portable inductive loop and establishing an effective management system for it.

General

We believe all that all recommendations in the Equality Impact Assessment should be implemented.

Further we believe that CLG should make the staff retention model (other than in London) mandatory on all FRAs and respective LACCs.

That out-standing EIAs required to be conducted by LACCs should be carried out as a matter of urgency.