

cc Secretary  
Mr Gowdy  
Mr Wolstencroft  
Mr O'Hara  
Miss Cooper  
Mr Taggart  
Miss Brown

TO: PS/Mr Viggers (B&L)  
FROM: R Wilson  
[Department of Economic Development]

**FAIR EMPLOYMENT AGENCY: PROPOSED STAFFING INCREASE AND MEDIA CAMPAIGN**

1. The purpose of this submission is to advise the Minister of a proposed media campaign by the FEA and to seek agreement to the provision of the necessary resources.

Introduction

2. Ministers have already agreed that the FEA should get additional staff to expand its activities in education, advice and monitoring during the interim period before the introduction of new fair employment legislation. Approximately £100K was earmarked for 1987/88 (estimated at £176K in 1988/89) but the precise allocation across the various Agency activities was subject to discussion with the Agency.
3. The Agency's proposals, whilst not exactly replicating the Department's original assessment, are broadly consistent with them and envisage a strong education and advice dimension and the engagement of employers in a sensitive and constructive fashion in promoting monitoring etc. A central feature of the Agency's proposals, which the Department has now approved, is a new employer liaison section.

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Media Campaign

4. In the wake of the appointment of Mr Hawthorne to the FEA (the Minister will recall that Mr Hawthorne, former BBC Controller for Northern Ireland, was appointed to give impetus to the Agency's promotional/presentational work) the Agency has been giving further thought to the publicity, promotion and education aspects of its remit. The Agency considers that a major TV campaign designed to promote the principle of equality of opportunity in employment would create a more receptive climate for the implementation by employers of the various recommendations in the Guide to Effective Practice and for the new legislation.
5. In essence the campaign would:
  - (a) address public opinion generally rather than simply employers;
  - (b) promote the concept of fair employment rather than the Fair Employment Agency itself;
  - (c) be apolitical in tone and highly professional in style and content.
6. Whilst there may be some debate about the effectiveness of a TV campaign in an area such as fair employment the fact is that DED has already accepted TV as an effective medium for influencing opinion certainly in relation to the energy campaign and YTP. This view also informed the DHSS "Doctor, Doctor" Campaign; DOEs Road Safety Campaign and IDBs "Come on Northern Ireland" Campaign and more recently the NIO's campaign to encourage the use of the confidential telephone to counter paramilitary activity. In principle, therefore, we must accept that TV is a recognised vehicle for influencing opinion.
7. In relation to costs the FEA's initial costing of up to £0.25m compares favourably with the YTP advertising budget in 1987/88 for the Workscheme alone ie £320K plus VAT. In 1984 the IDBs "Come on Northern Ireland" Campaign cost approximately £200K: the NIO campaign is expected to cost £250K. The area to be addressed by the FEA Campaign, of course, is sensitive and highly political. Whilst there is no guarantee of success it will clearly be difficult to reject the proposal as unfounded.

8. There are, of course, other considerations, not least the expectations in regard to publicity etc created by Hawthorne's appointment and the political embarrassment which would ensue if Government was thought to be unenthusiastic about influencing public opinion on such a central issue. There is no doubt that a number of parties would make considerable capital out of a refusal to endorse the Agency's proposal. It must also be said that there are some in the Agency (fortunately a minority) who would prefer to see any additional resources being devoted to vigorous enforcement of the current legislation through Section 12 investigations. A sensitively designed media campaign, coupled with a more pro-active and persuasive approach to employers by the FEA as envisaged in the Agency proposal for an employer liaison section, is more likely to achieve a positive response in terms of compliance with the new Guide and ultimately with new legislation. Attitude surveys done at intervals throughout the campaign should keep us advised of its effects. There would also be a wider political pay-off in terms of demonstrating Government's determination to address the fair employment issue. This is important both in the United States and in the Irish Republic where some 50% of homes are thought to receive UTV.
  
9. A policy analysis in respect of the proposed media campaign has been undertaken and Policy Division has confirmed that the proposal meets the criteria for support. The analysis recognises the importance of incorporating effectiveness measures.

Cost

10. The FEA has tentatively suggested £0.25m as the maximum cost of its proposed campaign. This is essentially a ball park figure based on the cost of previous TV campaigns. From subsequent discussion with the Agency, which has already undertaken some initial and essentially preparatory soundings about the possible shape of the proposed campaign, we consider that an allocation of £175,000 in 1988/89 would allow a credible and professional campaign with good prospects of success. We can meet this amount within our overall PES allocation.

Conclusion

11. Officials consider that there are sound political and practical advantages (as outlined in paragraph 8) for approving this additional expenditure by the Agency. There would also be clear presentational advantages if the Secretary of State could refer to the enhanced provision for the Agency in his forthcoming statement on the new legislation. On the other hand refusal to fund the venture will certainly attract criticism.
12. The Minister is recommended to agree the proposal and the allocation of £175,000 in 1988/89 in respect of the scheme.

*R Wilson*

R WILSON

15 February 1988

Mrs Brown

FEA Media Campaign

A draft assessment of this campaign is attached for your consideration, together with the outline policy analysis for reference.

TBH  
4/4/88

Mr Byrne  
3/3/89

Please file the attached papers in the appropriate file in the FEA Media Campaign.

W. Brown  
3/3/89

Jason ✓  
S170/86  
12/2  
File as above.

Please attach envelope/folder to inside of the file as this is a bulky document JS/2