

**PROGRAMME: "NICE WORK"**

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**INTERVIEWEES:**

Dipesh Shah, chief executive, the Atomic Energy Authority  
Martin Tiplady, Mets director of Human Resources  
Officer James Sangster, Chicago's 7th Police District, Englewood  
Wes Skogan, Chicago Police Force  
Veena Vasista, the Institute for Public Policy Research  
Michelynn Lafleche, the Runnymede Trust  
Kamaljeet Jandu, diversity manager, Ford  
Richard Thwaite, director of IT for Ford of Europe  
Colin Pine, pipe fitter, Ford  
Upkar Verdi, Ford  
Roger Putman, Chairman of Ford UK

LAMB: Hello. This afternoon we're investigating an issue that bosses barely mentioned in the past but which is fast rising up the corporate agenda, racial diversity at work. For organisations of every sort, from primary schools to multi-national corporations, creating a workforce which reflects multi-cultural Britain has become a vitally important challenge. Tough government targets are driving through change in the public sector, and in the private sector there's a wide-spread belief that an ethnically diverse workforce makes sound business sense. So this is a hot topic right now and it's going to become an even hotter one because of the startling changes we're going to see in UK Plc's workforce over the next twenty to thirty years. By then nearly a quarter of us will be over the age of 65 and there will be far fewer young people coming up to

working age. We also know that more of our workers will be from ethnic minorities. They already represent nearly 8% of the population and the numbers are rising. So in future the pool of new workers will be smaller and far more racially diverse than it is now. Things were very different thirty years ago when Dipesh Shah got his first job in Britain. He's a Ugandan Asian who came to England in the early '70s. Now, after a long and highly distinguished career in the oil industry, he's recently been appointed to the role of chief executive of the Atomic Energy Authority. When I spoke to him yesterday, he told me about his early experiences as an Asian worker in a largely-white company and even though he does feel that his employers were very enlightened by the standards at the time, he did encounter some problems.

SHAH: It would fair to say that over my early career there were always a few shades of behind the scenes discrimination that I'm sure everyone in my position suffered, but it was rare. I must stress it was very rare.

LAMB: At that time the feminist argument always went that women had to be twice as good as their male counterparts to achieve the same seniority at work. Did you find perhaps there was a parallel there with people of different ethnic origin?

SHAH Certainly in those days you did need to be better in order to get similar opportunities, but the world has moved on. People see beyond the superficial elements of gender, race, religion, colour, which is a very positive development in society.

LAMB: Despite those early difficulties, Dipah Shah believes that in most organisations ethnic minority workers can build successful careers on their own. He is not convinced that the case has been made for offering them special assistance.

SHAH: I'd hate to be in a position where people feel that they've got a particular role simply because of their gender or indeed their race. It would be a pity for them, it would be a pity for the organisations. Over the thirty years that I've been in industry, I think we made very tangible strides towards a totally open society in the way these decisions are made and I would argue very persuasively for more of the same and recognise that this is a long haul.

LAMB: The government doesn't believe that ethnic diversity is something that can be left to develop naturally in the public sector and five years ago it began setting ethnic minority employment targets. It's probably fair to say that no single organisation has been under greater pressure to bring about major change in this area than the Metropolitan Police, which was described as institutionally racist in the wake of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. To meet its target, 25.9% of its workforce must be drawn from ethnic minorities by 2009. Earlier I asked the Mets Director of Human Resources, Martin Tiplady, how confident he is that he can hit that figure.

TIPLADY: I have to say based on our current rate of progress we stand not unearthly to achieve that target, unless we have law change and other matters that enable us to speed up those initiatives. If we carry on as we are, we can confidently predict we'd achieve somewhere between 12 and 15%. That would still be a failure from the Home Office target.

LAMB: So you'd like to be able to temporarily opt out of the race discrimination legislation so that you could promote and recruit officers from ethnic minorities over and above those of indigenous officers?

TIPLADY: We have explored measures of positive discrimination. The law does not support us in doing that. We have had discussions with the Commission for Racial Equality but we are talking with them about whether there might be any scope in the future. If there were those sorts of changes for a short

period of time, we would give some priority to ethnic minorities to accelerate through the organisation at the slightly quicker pace than those of an indigenous origin. Let me just stress one thing though. At the end of the day, we always have to select on ability. People have to be able to satisfy a certain pass level to enter this organisation. All we are saying is, of the many people that reach that ability, we want to be able to accelerate the speed at which we may be able to enter ethnic minorities into the organisation and beyond.

LAMB: So to be absolutely clear, if you had a black officer and a white officer similarly qualified and experienced and a promotion became available, you would want to be able to give it to the black officer?

TIPLADY: I repeat, I'd like to be able to appoint that person on attaining a certain standard in all cases. In the very very few occasions where the basic selection would come down to indigenous versus ethnic minority, because of the overall need to continue the improvements in the balance in the workforce, it may be that we need to give some priority to ethnic minorities.

LAMB: Do you ever feel that it's ever right to discriminate against any group however worthy the aim, because if you were able to do this, you would in fact be discriminating against indigenous officers, wouldn't you?

TIPLADY: In an ideal world, no of course it's not ideal, but we don't live in an ideal world. We live in a world where over many many years there has been prejudice and bias and we need to try and counter some of that. We have made a lot of success in this organisation in trying to counter it but we do have this target and I think it's important to say that we shouldn't be entirely driven by the target. Our real view is that we will be a better police service if we are genuinely reflective of the population we are serving. There is a real business benefit in having a workforce that is reflective of the population. We think we will be a

better organisation. We think we will police London better if we have a more balanced workforce.

LAMB: Aren't you worried that enormous resentment would be generated if a scheme of that nature was brought in amongst white police officers? They would feel that they were being discriminated against unfairly in exactly the same way that officers from ethnic minorities have been in the past and still are on some occasions. How can that be a solution?

TIPLADY: Well I think there will be some who feel like that, but I do feel that there's a large part of the indigenous part of our organisation who actually feel like I have just said, that they think it important too that we are a workforce that is reflective of the public that we are trying to serve. And so undoubtedly there will be a perception amongst some along the lines of what you've just said. Frankly, we will just have to manage that.

LAMB: It's a big thing to manage because, as you say, white officers might feel, in theory, it's an excellent thing to have a diverse police force, but losing out on a promotion because of a positive discrimination scheme is a completely different thing, isn't it?

TIPLADY: Like most things, we are not talking of all opportunities, we are talking of here a large organisation of over 30,000 growing over the next three years to 35,000 officers where there are an awful lot of opportunities and I would like to think that this organisation made up of both indigenous and ethnic minority officers would feel overall that there are enough opportunities. It just may be that we have to give some priority slightly differently to how we have done over the last few years.

LAMB: I was talking thereto Martin Tiplady, director of Human Resources for the Metropolitan Police. The problems facing the Met are

undeniably many and varied but they're not unique. In the United States, a raft of race discrimination cases back in the 1970s prompted a new approach to policing there. Since then, the aim has been to move away from what was largely a white law enforcement body to one which reflects the racial diversity of the communities it serves. Chicago has one of the most diverse populations in the US and Simon Bishop went there to find out more.

**BISHOP:** (Radio announcement). Sitting in his police car on Chicago south side, officer James Sangster's radio reports shots fired in a nearby street. He immediately responds. (Radio announcement)

**POLICE OFFICER:** Step back, step back from the fence.

**BISHOP:** At the scene, police order a crowd of bystanders to back away. On the other side of the fence lies the body of a man in his twenties. He's alive but it looks like he's been shot in the leg. 53-year-old officer Sangster is a 14 year veteran of Chicago's 7th Police District known as Englewood. The population he serves is more than 98% African-American. While his colleagues deal with the shooting, I ask him if, as an African-American himself, he thinks Chicago's police force is doing enough to increase its ethnic diversity.

**SANGSTER:** I think they could do more, I think they could do more. I'm not talking about as far as the whites and the blacks are concerned. I'd really like to see more Hispanics, I'd like to see more Orientals on the job.

**BISHOP:** Has that changed since you joined?

**SANGSTER:** It's been an improvement, from the day that I've come on, it's been an incline for the department.

**BISHOP:** An incline maybe but at times it's been a fairly gradual one. Back in the 1970s it took court interventions to make the force confront its lack of diversity. By 1992, 35% of the departments officers were minorities. Today it stands at 43%. Still way below the 68% required to meet their target of reflecting the city's population and according to political science professor, and veteran researcher of police performance, Wes Skogan, the Chicago Police's diversity efforts get a solid "B" grade when compared to other US forces. However, he also says that despite improvement over the last fifteen years in community police relations, things are far from perfect in Chicago and he warns that this improvement may not be down to an increasingly diverse workforce.

**SKOGAN:** Study after study has been done of this followed by the Federal Government for almost thirty years, and what they find is that differences in the race and even the gender composition of the force doesn't determine much about what it is police do in the street. It's important, it's symbolically important. Don't forget that police officers are all blue first and the other hues and colours that they come in, come in second after blue. Blue is reinforced by their training, blue is reinforced by their experience, it's reinforced by their friendships, it's reinforced by the athletic leagues that they compete in, it's reinforced by the union that they belong to. Blue is the predominant colour of policing.

**LAMB:** Wes Skogan ending that report by Simon Bishop. I'm joined now by Veena Vasista of the Institute for Public Policy Research and Michelynn Lafleche from the Runnymede Trust which works to combat social injustice and racial discrimination. We've heard how ethnic diversity is being handled by the police here and in the US. Our government has gone down the road of setting ethnic minority employment targets for the public sector. We heard the Met acknowledge there is no chance they're going to hit there's. Michelynn, do you think there's any point setting targets like this if they're not going to be achievable.

LAFLECHE: I think there's an absolute point in doing this. This is a very essential part of any race equality strategy that all organisations, particularly public sector organisations that must meet the requirements of the law on this matter, must include as part of their strategy and their implementation process.

LAMB: But is it a helpful thing to do apart from the fact they do it in order to comply with legislation?

LAFLECHE: Yes it is. It's essential because it has to be the bottom line that you're going to measure. You have to set objectives if you're going to change. You can't actually change the culture or the make up of an organisation unless you actually understand what that organisation looks like and what you want it to look like in future.

LAMB: So you're not discouraged to hear that the Met saying we're not going to hit this target because you feel well at least they're working towards it?

LAFLECHE: At least they're working towards it, of course I'm discouraged and of course I'm disappointed, but at least they're working towards it and it's essential that they continue to do so.

LAMB: What's your feeling about positive discrimination, and I'm talking about discrimination not action here? Martin Tiplady says he wants to be able to opt out of the discrimination legislation so that he can favour albeit for limited periods of time, officers from ethnic minorities over white officers. Is that a good thing?

LAFLECHE: I'm not sure if it's a good thing. It's a controversial issue of course. Normally it's not something that I would recommend or support. In this case, however, I think there's possibly very good cause to do so and I think that

the kinds of considerations that the Met is putting towards this, and indeed the Commission for Racial Equality are considering in conjunction with them, are important. And the fact that they're taking that at a level that is so serious, is for me justification for them to continue to at least explore this possibility as a real possibility for the future.

LAMB: Veena, organisations in the US have gone down the affirmative-action route. They're always at pains to make it clear this isn't positive discrimination but it seems, from what I've heard, certainly they've got a lot closer to that line than we would legally be allowed to do over here. In your experience, has there been a backlash there from other staff?

VASISTA: In the United States there's been a backlash in different arenas. The most widely known one is in relation to the university and the education system and higher education. It's important though to make it clear that affirmative action does have a very broad definition and it's not only about what you're calling positive discrimination. The work that we've been doing here in the UK with a business-led task force on race equality and diversity in the private sector, the experience has been that there can be backlash or there can be hostility. But I know that companies that we have worked with that will be reporting next week and we have case studies which demonstrate that if managers are aware that there is that tension and actually have the skills and the capacities to work with their different sections of their teams and their employees, then it's very manageable and it's very possible to have positive action stabs in very proactive ways of promoting race equality in the work place without having backlash.

LAMB: It has taken a long time to get as far as we have done both here and in the States. How long do you think it will take before we are really on top of this in Britain, will the pace increase, are we looking at another thirty years before we're much further forward?

VASISTA: Obviously I don't have a crystal ball, so I can't really give you any definitive numbers and make that prediction. I would like to be optimistic and I know that again the business leaders that we've been working with would also like to be very ambitious. I think I agree with Michelynn in saying that targets are very important and it's important to aim high and the most important part of that is the process where you can see commitment and you can see it growing, even if specific targets aren't necessarily being met to date that you've set.

LAMB: Well we've talked a lot so far about how the public sector has been tackling diversity, but it is a very big issue for private companies too. None more so than the car maker, Ford, which five years ago was very forcibly confronted with the fact that race relations had gone disastrously wrong. Mike Johnson reports.

JOHNSON: I'm at the main gates of the Ford plant at Dagenham in Essex. It's an enormous site on the banks of the River Thames. It was 73 years ago in October 1931 that the first truck rolled out of these gates. But in more recent years it's been allegations of racism and bullying which have captured the headlines.

ANNOUNCER: Unions at Ford's complex of factories at Dagenham in Essex are to ballot on strikes over racism and bullying. They held mass meetings today....

ANNOUNCER: More than a thousand workers at the Ford car plant at Dagenham in Essex have staged an unofficial walk out over allegations of racism and bullying.

JOHNSON: In 1999 the issue of race brought production at Dagenham to a standstill. Just weeks earlier an industrial tribunal had heard how one Asian worker at the factory had been subjected to systematic abuse, including obscene

graphite featuring images of the Klu Klux Klan. Worse still, Ford stood accused of turning a blind eye to practices which saw some jobs restricted to white workers only. This, in a company which had already been forced to apologise and pay compensation to four black Dagenham workers, after white faces had been superimposed on their photographs in a sales brochure. As the situation threatened to spiral out of control, Ford's then president flew from Detroit to Dagenham to take personal charge.

**ANNOUNCER:** The head of the Ford Motor Company is to meet the leader of the Transport and General Workers Union to try to sort out the problems of racism which have resulted in unofficial strikes at the Dagenham plant in Essex.

**JOHNSON:** Stung by the criticism and the intense media attention, Ford promised a fundamental reform of the very structure of the company. That reform meant giving direct responsibility for diversity awareness to senior managers in positions of power. Each of Ford's ten British plants now has a diversity council made up of the factory manager, unions and personnel officers. Their job to make sure targets like the proportion of new recruits from ethnic minorities are set and met. Kamaljeet Jandu was a union equalities officer when soon after the Dagenham strikes he was approached by Ford to become its very first diversity manager.

**JANDU:** The company had taken the eye off the ball in terms of equality. Resources had to be put in place. More than that, when the people are responsible for running the factories, also are responsible for chairing and driving the diversity agenda. When your management reinforces those values as well, eventually people will get the message.

**JOHNSON:** That message is being driven home by a day-long diversity-awareness workshop now compulsory for every one of Ford's 15½ thousand British workers.

JANDU: It actually defines what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour but also what is acceptable and unacceptable language. For example, between friends in a closed room, you could use language which is not offensive to yourselves, but may be offensive and deeply hurtful to a colleague at work.

JOHNSON: Do you think people come away from these workshops changed people?

JANDU: I'd like to think that they come away more aware, the seed of the change is put in their minds.

JOHNSON: That change is nothing short of seismic. What Ford is saying to its workers is that behaviour they might not think twice about in their social lives won't be tolerated at work. Senior managers too are being given a blunt message. Succeed in meeting diversity targets or your pay packets will suffer.

THWAITE: I'm Richard Thwaite, director of IT for Ford of Europe. I have 730 people working for me across Europe. I have to measure their performance, I have to measure how they operate and what they're providing for Ford and my own performance is also measured in a similar way. Some of my bonus will be tied to me achieving certain objectives and one of the objectives is diversity.

JOHNSON: When Richard Thwaite sits down for the annual appraisal with his boss, his bonus will partly depend on a proportion of ethnic minority staff on the payroll. It will also depend on the results of staff surveys about whether managers like him are taking diversity issues seriously.

THWAITE: For me personally, there's a financial incentive as well as a moral and personal incentive. Personally morally, I feel it's absolutely the right thing to do. Equally within the company financially for me, if I'm not able to achieve my diversity objectives, then that could contribute to me not achieving the bonus that I may be entitled to.

JOHNSON: Does that concentrate the mind a little?

THWAITE: It certainly focuses you and yea makes you give it attention.

JOHNSON: Meanwhile on the shop floor, pipe fitter Colin Pine, says the diversity training, coupled with a new get-tough approach to racism, has had a significant impact.

PINE: I think at first people wasn't quite sure what the motive behind it was. But I think now that's changed. Now people realise now that we've got to work together. It won't be allowed, it's zero tolerance. If you do something what's racial, you're sacked, whether you're a plant manager or whether you're a press operator.

JOHNSON: And people are aware of this?

PINE: Yes. So they have to take it seriously, don't they?

VERDI: This is the packing operation where parts are coming in from our manufacturing plant, forklifts are running round the plant picking up the boxes and.....

JOHNSON: Upkar Verdi has worked for Ford for the past 28 years. He spent most of that time at Dagenham.

VERDI:                   The early days were very very tough. People just used to look at me and they used to question and think, who is he and why has he got that turban on his head, what does he mean? Didn't have a clue.

JOHNSON:                So you would get terms of abuse, words of abuse, would you?

VERDI:                   Yea you would, you would get that automatically. It can happen outside even on the street.

JOHNSON:                Just looking around as everybody else I can see is principally white, male, middle-aged, how easy is it working here now?

VERDI:                   It's okay, I mean they don't do that now because they understand cultures. The diversity programme has been explained to every employee and so obviously everyone's just being more cautious on what they say. I felt why has it taken so long for Ford to do this. I personally feel it's happened very late. They're making rapid progress but still a lot of work to do yet.

JOHNSON:                A quarter of the people who apply for Ford's graduate jobs are now from ethnic minorities compared to just 6% in 2001. The company says it hasn't had a single race-related case at an industrial tribunal for the past four years, but what Ford has been trying to engineer more than anything else at Dagenham is a fundamental shift in cultural attitudes, an ambition which its diversity manager, KamaljeetJandu, readily agrees will take more time to achieve.

JANDU:                   It's not something that can be done on paper, it's not something that can happen overnight. It's like turning round a tanker. Only the foundations have been put down. People are sensing a change in atmosphere and culture. I'd like to do myself out of a job, that is my aim. Eventually diversity

will be so far integrated into the way we do our business, that it cannot be reversed.

JOHNSON: Do you think that will happen?

JANDU: It must happen at some stage. We're still some way away from that but ultimately that has to be the aim.

LAMB: Kamaljeet Jandu, Ford's diversity manager ending that report by Mike Johnson and Roger Putman who is Chairman of Ford UK joins me now. Obviously there will be social justice issues for you to tackle. From what we've heard, you're really getting to grips with that. Does Ford also take the view now that there is a strong business case for promoting diversity?

PUTMAN: Oh absolutely certainly. I think you can actually look at two different aspects. If you look at Dagenham five years ago, it was one of the major car manufacturing plants for Ford in Great Britain. Three years ago we stopped manufacturing cars here. It's no secret that manufacturing industries are under huge pressures in Britain and in Europe because of cost, efficiency, productivity, all the things that we're looking to the Far East and the new accession partners in Europe. They're obviously far more geared up to provide low cost manufacturing. We've had to change the entire way in which we work, not just because of diversity issues, but we've had to find ways of getting leaner, getting waste out of the system. That is demanded. This has been an absolute demand that we work together in teams. It's no longer a long production line with cars going down with people working in isolation. We have to work as teams, you can't do that with a multi-racial workforce unless you have got behaviour that works. People have got to be focused on the job they do, not on the behaviour of somebody who is causing disruption.

LAMB: It's interesting to hear what you say, because Veena I know there's research from MIT in the United States, their feeling was that the business case had not been proven yet?

VASISTA: There is research from MIT and it's not quite that it hasn't been proven, it's that it isn't specifically quantifiable. It may be concrete, this change to your business in race equality equals this change in dollar or pound signs. But I know that the members of our task force very much endorse and Ford is a member of our task force, that there is a business case and sometimes it is actually concrete, more so perhaps for the retail industry where they can point to a specific store that through its change in race equality actually ends up selling more products or what have you. The business case can be made up in different ways and it is made up in different ways for different companies and some people started off with it's the right thing to do and those are our core values and then they go through other areas such as demographics, retaining staff, attracting talent and what have you. And so the business case is actually there even if you can't provide very specific numbers to endorse it. And certainly it comes back to your previous question about backlash. A key way of addressing backlash in the work place is to get support from everyone in the organisation and part of that is to make sure that they're very clear that promoting race equality in the work place and the strategies for it are tied to concrete business objectives.

LAMB: Roger, getting back to Ford specifically, you've obviously got different incentives in place, sticks and carrots in the form of sacking staff for inappropriate behaviour, paying bonuses to managers who hit their diversity targets. Are you finding that money is the most effective way to focus people's minds?

PUTMAN: I think it plays a part, I wouldn't say it's the most effective way. I think as we've downsized, Ford is a much smaller company in terms of total head count than it was. I think everyone is far more aware. I think the way in

which companies are run these days, are far more aware of how the company has got to progress to survive and therefore I think diversity and any incentive that is connected to it is just part of a much much broader, more complex, way of motivating people.

LAMB: Michelynn, what do you think about this? Is there a potential danger that other workers could see systems like this as managers being paid to recruit non-white workers?

LAFLECHE: I think the potential for people to interpret it that way is there certainly, but that's exactly then what needs to be worked on. The business case is essential in terms of getting an organisation, particularly in the private sector to understand what they can achieve with this in business terms. But we have to take a step beyond that now. Business cases have been in existence for a number of years in UK companies and Footsie companies but change has been happening extremely slowly and in some cases not at all. And that means that we need to think what the next step is and that's about organisational cultural change and I think Kamaljeet was referring to that at Ford as well.

LAMB: Veena, I know you're publishing a report on diversity I think specifically in the private sector next week. What else do you think employers should be doing?

VASISTA: In our report, "Race Equality Benefits for a Responsible Business", we actually promote change model for business and notably government. It's about business and government partnership to make better use of the existing infrastructure that is there in key areas such as leadership, education, information and advice, incentives and rewards and measuring progress. And so there are definitely ways in the existing system and one example might be, for example, in relation to procurement practices which can also enhance the business case in the private sector to take the agenda forward.

LAMB: Thank you all very much indeed. I'm afraid we're going to have to leave it there. If you'd like to know more about ethnic diversity at work, call the BBC Action Line. Here's the number it's 0800 044 044. That's 0800 044 044. I'll be back with another live edition of Nice Work at the same time next week. We'll be turning the spot light on creativity at work. Join me then.