

## Example Investigation

### **Multiple complaints of racial harassment and bullying.**

In early July 2005, a bus company requested an investigation into issues raised by two of their driver/operators.

Both these individuals worked at the same depot in London and the complainants felt that they had been bullied over a period of time by line managers and that they had been discriminated against due to their ethnic backgrounds.

The organisation successfully employed staff from a very wide range of cultures and ethnic backgrounds and had never previously considered whether there could be any internal cultural issues causing problems for minority staff. Given the chronological and geographical proximity of the two complaints, senior management asked HCC to investigate.

### **A number of issues were involved:**

- The investigation had to identify if there was any evidence of a broader problem than the isolated actions of a few managers whilst avoiding the pitfalls of a 'fishing expedition' which would upset staff and create legal issues.
- The company was subject to contractual requirements on equal opportunities so that any hint of 'institutional racism' was politically charged and potentially commercially disastrous.
- Following the tragic events of 7th July 2005, there were many other priorities for the staff and management of a bus company than finding time to participate in a diversity investigation.
- The two investigations had to be kept separate and confidentiality maintained in a relatively small working environment.

The individual approach taken by HCC with every client and every investigation was well suited to handling these issues and a successful outcome was achieved for both of the investigations. Each individual involved in the information gathering process was handled sensitively taking into account the extent of their involvement in the events of 7/7/05. The very difficult operational environment was acknowledged by extending the usual timescale for completing an investigation slightly.