



Government **Equalities** Office

Putting equality at the heart of government



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A Fair and Equal Society For All: the government's agenda

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Government Equalities Office

- **Established as a separate Department in October 2007 working to Harriet Harman, supported by Vera Baird, Maria Eagle and Michael Foster**
- **Aim: Improve equality and reduce discrimination and disadvantage**
 - **Strengthen and streamline legislative framework**
 - **Improve equality at work:**
 - **Open up opportunities in public life:**
 - **Improve life chances and public services**
 - **Promote physical safety**
- **Sponsor Equality and Human Rights Commission and Woman's National Commission**
- **Work Closely with OGDs, public, private and voluntary sectors**



What are the challenges

- **Pay: Gender Pay Gap** 22.6%
- **Employment: BME gap** 13%
 - Disabled gap 26%
- **Public Life:** 200 years before an even gender split in H of C
- **Life Chances:** poor bright children overtaken by age 5
- **Society:** 6 out of 10 children suffer homophobic bullying
1 in 5 older people can't get travel insurance



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EQUALITY BILL PACKAGE

Streamlining

- Distilling 9 Acts into 1

Strengthening

- New Single Public Sector Duty
- End to Age Discrimination in Goods, Facilities and Services
- Gender Pay Reporting
- New “Socio-Economic” Duty

Supporting

- Promote procurement, positive action, better enforcement and guidance
- Read-across to draft EU anti-discrimination directive under negotiation



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Territorial Scope

- **Nearly all the Bill is GB-wide (England, Wales, Scotland)**

Except for

- **Socio-Economic Duty: England and Wales but not Scotland (but consultation ongoing)**
- **Public Sector Specific Duties: Scotland (as now) and Wales (New) Ministers to impose specific duties on their purely national authorities and devolved functions of certain cross border authorities**
- **Northern Ireland: all devolved save for all women shortlists.**



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Improving Life Chances

- **New Socio – Economic Duty**
 - **Strategic**
 - **Targeted : Police authorities but not police directly**
 - **Complementary**
- **National Equality Panel**
 - **An anatomy of inequality in Britain**
 - **Report January 2010**



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Fairer and More Responsive Public Services

- **New Single Streamlined Equality Duty**
- **Wider Scope (New: age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender reassignment)**
- **Similar Structure: general “Due Regard” Duty backed by Specific duties**
- **Eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations**
- **Key Principles: evidence, involvement, transparency, and capability**
- **Want culture change and engagement not tick box**
- **Consultation on Specific Detail underway: closed 30 September**



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Procurement

- **Public Sector Spend : £220bn pa**
- **Important that money spent on procurement is used to maximise wider social benefit, within EU regulations**
- **Equality Bill and specific duties strengthening are important**
- **Legislation underpinned by guidance will bring both clarity and consistency on what is possible.**
- **Dialogue between Equality and Procurement experts within and across Police Forces is key to making the proposals work.**



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Positive Action

- **Aim to promote innovation and economic competitiveness**
- **Build on existing good practice (eg out reach, mentoring, coaching, support networks)**
- **Bill extends possibilities for employers but**
 - voluntary;
 - based on merit
- **Massive need to bust the myths**



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Making It Work

- **Strengthening Employment Tribunal Powers**
- **Introduced Dual Discrimination**
- **Support for Equality Representatives**
- **EHRC Leading on Improved Guidance**



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What Happens Next

- **Consultations on PSD and Age: closed end September 2009**
- **House of Commons Report and Third Reading: end November 2009**
- **House of Lords: 5th Session (Dec 2009 to March 2010)**
- **Enacted: Spring 2010**
- **Consultations on Secondary Legislation: summer 2010**
- **Enter into Force: Autumn 2010 and Later**
- **EU Directive Agreed: Unlikely before summer 2010**



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Final Messages

- **Generic all strand approach: break down silos**
- **Recognition of differential need (eg women prisoners)**
- **Recognition of socio-economic factors**
- **Emphasis on equality data and evidence**
- **Emphasis on community and user participation**
- **Move from process to outcomes**
- **Move equality from margins to mainstream**