



Government **Equalities** Office

Putting equality at the heart of government



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Equality: Looking Ahead

2nd National Making Equality Work Conference
23 September 2010

Jonathan Rees



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- **Small Policy Department responsible for equality strategy and legislation**
- **Report to Theresa May and Lynne Featherstone**
- **Promote equality in workplace, and fairer representation in society, in GB and internationally**
- **Sponsor Equality and Human Rights Commission**



Context: Still Major Challenges

- **Pay: Gender Pay Gap** 16.4%
- **Employment: BME gap** 14%
- **Disabled gap** 27%
- **Public Life:** 200 years before an even gender split in H of C
- **Life Chances:** poor bright children overtaken by age 6
- **Society:** 6 out of 10 LGB children suffer homophobic bullying
1 in 5 older people reported that they can't get travel insurance
- **Wealth:** Average Bangladeshi household £15,000
Average White & Indian household £200,000+



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Context

- **Spending Round**
 - Do more with (much) less
- **Economic recovery still fragile**
- **Demographic Changes**
 - Ageing society
 - More women working
- **Outdated, complex, strand-specific legislation**



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The Coalition Government

Commitment “to tear down barriers to social mobility and equal opportunities and help to build a fairer society”

Action To Date

- Cross Government Programme on LGB and T (June)
- Removal of Default Retirement Age (July)
- Promote gender equality on company boards (August)

Some Other Commitments

- Extend right to request flexible working
- Promote equal pay and address workplace discrimination
- Support of disabled people to become more active in public life



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Overall Approach

- **Equalities underpinning all work to create a fairer society (eg links to social mobility)**
- **Embedded and joined-up across Government**
- **Focus on outcomes not process**
- **For all: key part of long-term economic vision and making best of people's talents**



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The Equality Act 2010: What's it do?

Streamlining and Simplifying

- Distills 9 Acts into 1
- Harmonises Definitions and Exceptions

Strengthening

- A new Equality Duty on public bodies
- Bans age discrimination
- Bans dual discrimination
- Gender pay and equality reporting*
- Extends positive action*
- Strengthens protection for disabled people
- Power to ban caste discrimination
- Socio-economic duty*

* Ministers currently considering how to proceed



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Fairer, more responsive public services: the Equality Duty: the Equality Duty

- **New Single Integrated Duty**
 - **Applies to listed public bodies and those discharging public functions**
 - **As now applies to employment, policy making and service delivery**
- BUT**
- **Wider Scope (New: age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity)**
 - **General duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations**
 - **Specific duties to publish data, assess impact, set equality objectives and report progress at least annually**
 - **New emphasis on accountability/transparency away from tick box processes**



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Age

- The Act would end **harmful / unjustified** age discrimination in the provision of services and public functions – including in health and social care. It will only apply to the over-18's.
- **Beneficial** age discrimination can continue e.g. free bus passes for over-60s and discounts for pensioners, such as cheaper fish and chips.
- A **draft Order** will be prepared detailing the exceptions from the age discrimination ban, this will allow beneficial age practices to continue.
- We currently intend to **consult** on the draft Order in **November 2010**



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When's it happening?

- **90% of Act introduced on 1 October 2010**
- **Public Sector Equality Duty on 6 April 2011 (consulting on specific duties until 10 November)**
- **Age Discrimination Ban not before 2012**



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What Help is Available? Guidance & Codes

- 1. GEO has published a series of summary and guides branded Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know?
www.equalities.gov.uk
- 2. Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) have published detailed guidance at www.equalityhumanrights.com
- 3. EHRC are also producing codes of practice for the Act which are expected in Autumn 2010.



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What's it mean for you?

- **Builds on what's good already**
- **Some areas to consider:**
 - Raising awareness
 - Capacity building – (eg in engaging different groups)
 - Positive action – targeting services at disadvantaged groups
 - Procurement
 - Transparency in Reporting
 - Deficit Reduction: impact on most vulnerable



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Final Messages

- **Integrated approach (while recognising differences)**
- **Outcomes not process**
- **Strategic leadership not pc (or hr)**
- **Business Benefits and Save Money**
- **If you want to know more, go to www.equalities.gov.uk**