

Public Sector Equality Duty

Aims and objectives

The general equality duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the 2010 Equality Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. These are taken to be the three aims of the general equality duty. The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities.

Results and impact

The government claims that the equality duty has assisted in integrating consideration of equality into the day-to-day business of public authorities. It argues that design of policies and the delivery of services generally reflect equality considerations, as compliance with the general equality duty is a legal obligation, and is promoted as a measure which makes good business sense. Many organisations have found it beneficial to draw on a broader range of talent and to better represent the community that they serve. Awaiting evaluation of Public Sector Equality Duty, due in April 2013.

Creator/owner/responsible institution

Government Equalities Office ; Equality and Human Rights Commission

Contents/activities/services

On 5 April 2011 the public sector equality duty (the equality duty) came into force in England, Scotland and Wales. This duty replaces the existing race, disability and gender equality duties. The public sector equality duty (the equality duty) is made up of a general equality duty which is supported by specific duties. The 'public sector equality duty' is the formal title of the legislation, the 'general equality duty' is the overarching requirement or substance of the duty, and the 'specific duties' are intended to help performance on the general equality duty. The duty covers the following eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. Although there is no explicit legal requirement to collect and use equality information across the protected characteristics, it is viewed as important to enabling public authorities to fulfil their duty.

Additional information

Periodicity: Impact assessments are carried out before a proposed activity is adopted. However, this is not mandatory, and there is no formal impact assessment process. The focus instead is on 'due regard' for equality considerations.

Metadata

ONGOING: Ne

COVERAGE: NAT

TOOL CATEGORY: [Institutional transformation](#)

TARGET GROUP: Members of the government, Policy makers / civil servants