

# Closure of the Disability Employment Advisory Committee

Equality Impact Assessment

March 2011

# Equality impact assessment for Closure of the Disability Employment Advisory Committee

## Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions has carried out an equality impact assessment on the proposal to introduce the closure of the Disability Employment Advisory Committee (DEAC), assessing the proposal in line with the current public sector equality duties.

This process will help to ensure that:

- the Department's strategies, policies and services are free from discrimination;
- the Department complies with current equality legislation;
- due regard is given to equality in decision making and subsequent processes; and
- opportunities for promoting equality are identified.

## Scope of this assessment

The existing public sector equality duties require the department to show due regard when developing new policies or processes to the impact of the proposals on race, disability and gender (including gender reassignment).

This assessment looks at the available evidence to determine the extent to which the effect of the proposed change differs between persons sharing a protected characteristic and persons who do not.

The Equality Act 2010 simplifies and strengthens the existing framework of anti-discrimination legislation. The equality impact assessment will demonstrate how the Department has demonstrated it has paid due regard when developing new services or processes to protection against discrimination on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and religion and belief (the protected characteristics).

# Brief outline of the Disability Employment Advisory Committee

DEAC is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It was set up in 2002 and provides strategic advice to Ministers and officials, in confidence, about the employment of disabled people.

The committee comprises a Chair, 14 members and one co-opted adviser on TUC issues, supported by a Secretariat provided by the Department for Work & Pensions. Except for the post of chair which is a part-time paid appointment, its members and adviser work on a voluntary basis. They represent a wide spectrum of interest and professional level expertise in disability and employment matters and are appointed in their own right; not in any representative capacity. All appointments were made by the former Minister for Disabled People.

## Consultation and involvement

In late 2009, the Department for Work & Pensions commissioned an independent review of the Committee's effectiveness as part of the Department's wider programme of reviews of Arms Length Bodies (ALBs). The proposal for the future of DEAC is part of the wider proposal for ALB reform being considered by the Cabinet Office and is subject to this wider consultation process.

## Impact of the Disability Employment Advisory Committee closure

Customers of DEAC include Government Ministers and policy makers across Government Departments where the employment, or transition to employment, of disabled people is an issue. Principally, these are in the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) sponsors an advisory NDPB, Equality 2025, whose membership is wholly made up of disabled people. Equality 2025's remit is to advise on issues affecting disabled people. Equality 2025 will therefore be available to provide Government with advice on disability employment issues. This means there is an overlap between the two NDPBs and it is proposed that:

- a) the role of advising on disability issues should rest within a single advisory group; and
- b) Equality 2025's remit of providing advice on issues that affect disabled people allow it to offer advice on disability employment issues. Ministers and Government officials will therefore continue to be able to receive confidential advice about employment-related disability issues from disabled people.

## Impact on people with protected characteristics

There is no apparent risk that people with protected characteristics, as described in the Equality Act, will be disadvantaged by the closure of DEAC. Equality 2025 will continue to provide advice to Government on issues that affect **all** disabled people in the UK, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and religion and belief.

## Monitoring and evaluation

The new arrangement will be subject to the existing arrangements already in place to monitor the effectiveness of Equality 2025. All advice provided by Equality 2025 is evaluated using a comprehensive evaluation form on how and if advice provided by Equality 2025 has been used. Members of Equality 2025 are appraised on an annual basis.

## Next steps

The new arrangements will be announced as part of the wider announcement regarding the Government's proposals for the abolition of selected NDPBs.

## Contact details

The DEAC Secretariat can answer questions on the EIA and also provide alternative formats where requested.

They can be contacted at the following email address

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