



Localism Bill: abolition of the Standards Board Equalities impact assessment



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Equalities impact assessment

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ISBN: 978 1 4098 2767 2

DCLG full Equality Impact Assessment: Abolition of the Standards Board

(Before you complete an EqIA please read the guidance notes.)

1. Which group(s) of people has been identified as being disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

All staff (78 employees up to 31 August 2010) at the Standards Board for England will lose their jobs if the organisation is abolished as proposed. Statistics are held for the protected groups by gender, race, age, disability and working pattern. Statistics are not held for religion or sexual orientation.

For the total workforce at 1 August 2010, the statistics held were:

Ratio of females to males: 54%:46% (42:36)

Ratio of white, did not disclose, and staff from a black and minority ethnic background: 95% white: 4% black and minority ethnic:1% did not disclose (74:3:1)

Age range	Percentage	Number in total	Male/ Female		Black and minority ethnic/ white /did not disclose		
17-29	28	22	8	4	0	12	0
30-39	28	22	5	2	0	6	1
40-49	21	16	2	2	1	3	0
50-65	23	18	2	0	1	1	0
TOTAL	100	78	17	8	2	22	1

No-one declared themselves to have a disability

Ratio of full-time to part-time staff: 91%:9% (71:7)

The Standards Board for England has developed a staged workforce reduction programme in response to the Government's announcement on 20 May 2010 of its intention to abolish the organisation and following cuts in their budget in June 2010 of 18 per cent. Stage One of their workforce reduction programme was a voluntary redundancy scheme, allowing 25 staff to leave on 31 August 2010. The Standards Board for England carried out a full equalities impact assessment for Stage One, and the statistics for the protected groups among the staff who left were:

Ratio of females to males: 60%:40% (15:10)

Ratio of white, did not disclose, and staff from a black and minority ethnic background: 95% white:4% black and minority ethnic:1% did not disclose (22:2:1)

Age range	Percentage	Number in total	Male/Female		Black and minority ethnic/white/did not disclose		
17-29	48	12	8	4	0	12	0
30-39	28	7	5	2	0	6	1
40-49	16	4	2	2	1	3	0
50-65	8	2	2	0	1	1	0
TOTAL	100	25	17	8	2	22	1

No-one declared themselves to have a disability

Ratio of staff working full-time and part-time: 88%:12% (22:3)

The statistics for the protected groups among the remaining 53 staff who will be affected by the abolition are:

Ratio of females to males: 52%:48% (26:24)

Ratios of white, did not disclose and staff from a black and minority ethnic background: 98% white: 2% black and minority ethnic:0% did not disclose (52:1:0)

Age range	Percentage	Number in total	Male/ Female		Black and minority ethnic / white /did not disclose		
17-29	19	10	5	5	0	10	0
30-39			7	8	0	15	0
40-49	23	12	6	6	1	11	0
50-65	30	16	8	8	0	16	0
TOTAL	100	53	26	27	1	52	0

Ratio of full-time to part-time staff: 91%:9% (48:5)

A further equality impact assessment will be carried out for Stage 2 of the workforce reduction programme, which will involve a further voluntary redundancy scheme for staff to leave by 31 March 2011. It is impossible to assess the equality impacts on the remaining 53 staff until it is known whether anyone in the protected groups occupies posts that will be at risk of being surplus to requirements due to the work either ceasing or diminishing.

When the proposed abolition takes effect, the impacts on the remaining Standards Board for England staff could have an adverse impact on those in the protected groups if their skills and qualifications are not attractive to the local job market when they lose their jobs.

2. **In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts? Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan.**

As an arms-length body sponsored by DCLG, the Standards Board for England has prepared an action plan for reducing its workforce ahead of closure with DCLG approval, and the Standards Board for England will make an assessment of the equality impacts at each stage of their workforce reduction programme, reporting any adverse equality impacts arising from the policy to DCLG. The following arrangements for Stage One of its workforce reduction plan were made to minimise or eliminate adverse equality impacts:

- the redundancy policy was based on a formal agreement because this is less likely to result in discrimination than 'ad-hoc' arrangements
- a meaningful 90-day consultation following Cabinet Office protocols was held with staff and the trade union, ensuring that staff on maternity leave and home-workers had easy access to proposals for Stage One
- accreditation was arranged for staff to access the Civil Service Vacancies Gateway to open up more job opportunities
- after identifying the posts most at risk of compulsory redundancy following budget restrictions and reduced activities, priority was given to people in these posts for acceptance on the voluntary redundancy scheme in order to avoid compulsory redundancies
- the Standards Board for England sought to redeploy staff most at risk who wished to stay on if they could take over posts of staff who were given voluntary redundancy
- a helpline was provided for staff
- the selection criteria for redundancy were developed in line with the ACAS guidance on handling redundancies to ensure that the criteria were objective, and in order to avoid discrimination or unfairness to any of the protected groups
- the trade union was consulted on the selection criteria and their feedback used to inform the final criteria
- DCLG helped the Standards Board for England to obtain approval to provide outplacement services to staff going on voluntary redundancy to respond to their individual needs when seeking new job opportunities – for example, help with writing CVs, making job applications and preparing for interviews

- 3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision. Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them.**

The policy proposal to abolish the Standards Board for England is announced Government policy being taken forward via the Localism Bill, and DCLG does not plan to consult on this policy proposal. The Standards Board for England carried out a consultation with their staff in accordance with Cabinet Office protocols about reducing their workforce. The Standards Board for England will review equality impacts and conduct further consultations of its staff in future stages of its workforce reduction plan. They will share details about these consultations and the equalities impacts of their plans for future stages of redundancies with DCLG in due course.

- 4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service? Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments.**

The policy will ultimately affect all of the Standard Board for England's staff because it is the Government's policy to abolish the organisation and it is planned to implement this policy through new legislation.

The staff who left on 31 August applied on voluntary redundancy terms. Any adverse impacts were mitigated wherever possible by the arrangements set out in section 2 above for Stage One of the workforce reductions. Action will be taken to mitigate and eliminate any adverse equality impacts arising from later stages of the workforce reductions.

- 5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.**

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place.

The Standards Board for England will carry out further assessments of the equalities impacts on the remaining staff that will inform Stage Two of their workforce reduction plan. The Standards Board for England will share the assessment with DCLG in this and future equalities impact assessments. DCLG will ensure that they are fully engaged with and alerted to any adverse impacts arising, and to measures being taken to mitigate those impacts. After the organisation has been abolished, the Post Implementation Review for wider policy to abolish the Standards Board regime could include a review of the equality impacts arising from the abolition of the organisation. The Post Implementation Review would be carried out three to five years after implementation of the policy.

6. The full Equality Impact Assessment form should be signed off by one of the following: a deputy director, director or director general.

Name of person signing off the full Equality Impact Assessment: **Paul Rowsell**

Role: **Deputy Director and Head of Division**

Date: **6 December 2010**

Note: Equality Impact Assessments should be published with detailed publication arrangements agreed with the Directorate of Communication. In most cases this will be as part of a broader impact assessment or consultation exercise which will ensure the requisite clearance from the relevant minister.

A copy of the full Equality Impact Assessment form should be retained by the originator for audit purposes.

Full Equality Impact Assessment - action plan

Actions taken or proposed	Rationale for the action	Beneficiaries of the action	Timing	Responsibility
Changes made: Changes that have been made to policy as a result of the Equality Impact Assessment.				
Not applicable – the policy is announced Government policy and included in the Localism Bill				
Mitigation: For areas where a policy may have a differential impact on certain groups, what arrangements are in place or proposed to mitigate these effects?				
<p>The actions already taken by the Standards Board for England to mitigate equality impacts arising from the first stage of their workforce reduction programme are set out in Section 2 above. These and any further actions necessary to mitigate equality impacts will be taken in future stages of the organisation’s workforce reduction plans.</p>				

Justification: For areas where a policy may impact negatively (but not illegally) on certain groups but mitigation is not possible (e.g. an overriding societal driver) there needs to be a strategy for handling issues of unfairness.

Not applicable – the policy is announced Government policy and included in the Localism Bill

Actions taken or proposed

Rationale for the action

**Beneficiaries of
the action**

Timing

Responsibility

Opportunities: Please state actions designed to maximise positive effects, i.e. opportunities identified for: promoting equality, good relations or knowledge about groups; increasing civic and democratic participation; or addressing inequalities.

Not applicable – the policy is announced Government policy and included in the Localism Bill

Monitor: How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the new policy?

There will be a Post Implementation Review for the associated policy proposal to abolish the requirement on local authorities to adopt a code of conduct for their elected and co-opted members. This review could include the equalities impacts of the abolition of the Standards Board for England

Publish: Give details of how the results of the Equalities Impact Assessment will be published.

The Full Equalities Impact Assessment is to be published on the DCLG website

In the interests of transparency

Members of the public, elected and co-opted members of local and other authorities, local and other authorities to whom the Standards Board regime applies, MPs and other interested parties.

Introduction of the Localism Bill

DCLG