

Hello

Please find attached comments in respect of the Equality Act 2010: The public sector Equality Duty: reducing bureaucracy policy review paper:

The public sector Equality Duty: Reducing bureaucracy – Policy review paper

Comments on the new draft regulations

Lighter touch transparency requirement:

The requirement to publish data to show compliance with the general duty is open to interpretation. Some organisations will publish information covering a range of areas. Others may be limited in the information and data that they divulge.

There will be varying levels of compliance and transparency. As a result there will be limited opportunity to compare practices. There will also be little opportunity for communities to challenge organisations.

The general duty can only be effective if there is some form of scrutiny. There will be little scrutiny if public bodies are all doing different things.

The removal of the need to publish details of the:

equality analysis undertaken when reaching policy decisions
information considered when undertaking the analysis
engagement undertaken when determining equality objectives
engagement undertaken when determining policy

sends out an underlying message that there is no need to engage with interested parties or analyse decisions to ensure the most vulnerable people in society are not adversely affected.

The removal of these requirements dilutes the legislation to such an extent that it becomes ineffective.

A perceived removal of the need to engage and carry out equality analysis, alongside the removal of the requirement to publish data means that key requirements for transparency are obstructed. This in turn removes or reduces the opportunity for scrutiny.

Equality objectives

The option to have only one objective effectively allows public bodies to overlook and/or ignore a number of key employment and service delivery areas. The fact that the one objective does not have to be re-visited for four years suggests that equality is not important.

The removal of the requirement on public bodies to describe the process of how they will measure progress, suggests there is no longer a need to

measure progress at all. As before, this suggests that equality issues and progress are no longer important.

Overall, there is deep concern about the proposed changes, which will weaken the specific duties to such an extent that they will be effectively worthless.

Without engagement and analysis organisations may not understand the needs and requirements of communities and consequently, will not be able to provide a service which meets the needs of people who are often the most vulnerable in society.

All public bodies are involved in providing a service to communities. Without the support of effective equality legislation the services provided in the future are unlikely to be the most appropriate and cost effective. Many people with particular protected characteristics will be disadvantaged.

If you require any further details or information about the above comments please let me know.

Kind Regards

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