

Harshbir Sangha  
Specific Duties – Policy review  
Government Equalities Office  
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Ref:

Dear Mr Sangha,

I am writing to respond to the Policy Review of the Specific Duties on behalf of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Borough Council.

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has been at the forefront of reducing bureaucracy, including by refocusing our approach to equalities. The only way an organisation of the size and complexity of a local authority can do this effectively is by using effective processes. The proposed changes to the Duty would take away the requirement for public sector organisations to carry out sufficiently robust work to ensure that customer needs are considered and met effectively, which would be contrary to the spirit of the Localism Bill. It is essential that to spend money wisely public sector organisations know who they serve, and who our customers are.

LBBDD has simplified our approach to Equality Impact Assessments, and focussed on supporting managers to ensure that equalities considerations are made as part of the Council's day to day business, rather than through separate work. In addition we have established equalities fora to ensure that equalities groups have an effective, independent and proportionate involvement in the development and delivery of Council services, and refocused our approach to equalities to ensure that all efforts are focussed on achieving meaningful outcomes for residents.

By reducing the requirement on public sector organisations to publish only "one or more" equality objectives, the proposed changes would diminish the power of the Bill to enable communities to hold statutory organisations to account, and would weaken Council's mandate to protect and promote the needs of vulnerable equalities groups.



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While the Council fully supports all efforts to reduce bureaucracy and unnecessary processes, the proposals made in the consultation go beyond this, and would result in a reduction in the account taken of and services provided to some of the most vulnerable groups of residents served by local Councils.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hodson', with a stylized, flowing end.

Paul Hodson  
Group Manager  
Community Cohesion & Equalities