

21st April 2011

Response to the **Public Sector Equality Duty: Reducing Bureaucracy** policy review paper

Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO) is the voluntary sector support organisation covering Greater Manchester. Our vision is of a strong, diverse and influential voluntary sector. We support local voluntary action by local people by providing specialist support, knowledge, voice, infrastructure and innovation, working in partnership with other support organisations and with the public and private sectors.

1. Equality Objectives

Government should encourage public bodies covered by the Equality Act to publish a number of objectives appropriate to their size and scope – whilst a limited number of bodies may only develop a small number of objectives, Government could give the impression that a single objective is appropriate in many cases. Rather, guidance should focus on developing a number of meaningful objectives that reflect the particular circumstance or existing issues for that body, and taking action to achieve the objectives.

2. Publication of Information

Government should retain requirements to publish the following:

- **engagement they have undertaken when determining their policies;**
- **engagement they have undertaken when determining their equality objectives;**
- **equality analysis they have undertaken in reaching their policy decisions;**
- **information they considered when undertaking the analysis.**

Good practice and common sense would suggest that consultation with public sector staff and service users, including individuals with protected characteristics, would be ongoing and part of the process of continuous improvement and learning. Therefore, in many cases public bodies will already have the information (relating to the above bullet points) and it need not be considered additional work or bureaucratic to publish this information.

Whilst there is undoubtedly much need and scope for improvement in terms of equality and diversity for staff and service users, there are also many positive examples of good practice that could easily be shared with the public and for peer learning. Where information is published it should be timely, in a useable format and easy to find.

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