

The Equality Strategy

Building a Fairer Britain: Progress Report

22 May 2012

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Government believes that our society and our economy are strongest when everyone has the opportunity to contribute. In the current economic climate it is more important than ever that we draw on the talents of all.

1.2 Despite forty years of legislation to tackle discrimination and advance equality, many barriers to social mobility and equal opportunity still persist. We recognise this, and we are committed to breaking these barriers.

1.3 In December 2010, we published the first ever cross-government equality strategy 'Building a Fairer Britain'. It sets out a new way of tackling inequality through recognising specific problems and focusing on specific actions to deal with them. The strategy is set within the Coalition Government's new approach to achieving change, which focuses on:

- **Creating equal opportunities for all:** 'equal opportunities' does not mean uniformity – it means treating everyone as an individual, recognising both their needs and their talents, and giving them an equal chance to progress.
- **Devolving power to people:** removing top-down targets, and supporting everyone in playing their role as active citizens.
- **Transparency:** shining a light on inequalities and giving individuals and local communities the tools and information they need to challenge organisations that are not offering fair opportunities and public services that are not delivering effectively.
- **Supporting social action:** giving voluntary and public sector professionals the freedom to collaborate and innovate.
- **Embedding equality:** integrating equality considerations into government policies and programmes.

1.4 These principles underpinned action to tackle the five key priority areas that the Government identified as its focus in the Equality Strategy:

- **Early years, education and social mobility** – tackling deprivation and inequalities relating to family background, and improving social mobility.
- **Creating a fair and flexible labour market** – working with businesses to develop a fairer and more flexible labour market that draws on the talents of all and builds a strong economy.

- **Opening up public services and empowering individuals and communities** – devolving power to local communities and promoting greater participation and inclusion in public, political and community life.
- **Changing culture and attitudes** – building respect for all, tackling discrimination, hate crime and violence.
- **Making it happen** – leading by example by being transparent in the policy making, and giving people the information they need to hold services to account.

1.5 This new approach does not see equality as an add-on or a bureaucratic process. The previous Government's focus on regulation and process led to the creation of a self sustaining 'equality industry' that advocated gold plating procedure often at the expense of impact. We are focusing our efforts in developing intelligent policies that can give people real opportunities to improve their lives. Our focus is on transparency, better information and greater accountability to drive change. For example, we are working closely with the private and voluntary sector to encourage organisations to be more transparent about how they are helping women overcome barriers in the workplace.

1.6 In the same vein, in November 2011, we established an innovative entrepreneurs mentoring scheme to support those – especially women – who wanted to set up or expand their own business. Over 10,000 volunteers have registered to become mentors, of whom nearly 40% are women. The project is on track to deliver 15,000 mentors by the end of September 2012, all trained to help women achieve their potential.

1.7 We do not see equality in isolation from the Government's overall ambition to achieve greater freedom, fairness and responsibility. The Equality Strategy is one element in the Government's armoury to tackle disadvantage. It is complemented by a range of other measures. The Social Mobility Strategy 'Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers', published in April 2011, seeks to break cycles of disadvantage linked to family background. In December 2011, a funding of £450 million was made available to address the problems faced by the 120,000 'Troubled Families'. The Child Poverty Strategy, published in April 2011, focuses on providing support to the most vulnerable children. In February 2012, we published 'Creating the conditions for integration' setting out our approach to achieving a more integrated society. In March 2012, we launched a new Social Justice Strategy, putting forward a new way of both preventing and tackling multiple disadvantages. And we are currently developing a Strategy to address the barriers that disabled people face to equal participation in society.

1.8 The Government's new approach is bearing fruit; this report sets out some of the progress made to date in the five priority areas in the Equality Strategy.

2. Progress Overview

Early Years, Education and Social Mobility

2.1 We want to tackle inequality at the root of its manifestation and early years and education can have a profound and long-lasting influence on one's life chances. Even by the time children start school there are already wide variations in ability between children from different backgrounds, for instance; less than half of children from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve a 'good level of development' by age five in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

2.2 This Government is clear that all young children deserve the best possible start in life and must be given the opportunity to fulfil their potential. To achieve this ambition, we have committed to extending free early years education to 40% of two year olds from September 2014, starting with the most disadvantaged. We also introduced a Pupil Premium to help schools support disadvantaged pupils. The schools will now get extra funding for each pupil known to be eligible for free school meals, or in care for longer than six months.

2.3 We want to ensure that children, no matter what their background or family circumstances, are equipped for life and ready for school. The Government committed to maintaining a network of Sure Start Children's Centres across the country which are open to all, but provide more effective support for the most disadvantaged families. Our reforms to Sure Start are refocusing Children's Centres on their core purpose of improving child outcomes and narrowing gaps between the most and least disadvantaged and reforming their accountability framework to drive improvements in service quality.

2.4 In order to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in underperforming schools, we established an Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) in 2011 with an upfront investment of £125 million. The foundation will run for a minimum of 10 years. Taking forward the recommendations from Graham Allen's review into early years, we are also procuring an Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), which will help spread best practice and evidenced-based programmes leading to demonstrable improvements in the social and emotional bedrock of children.

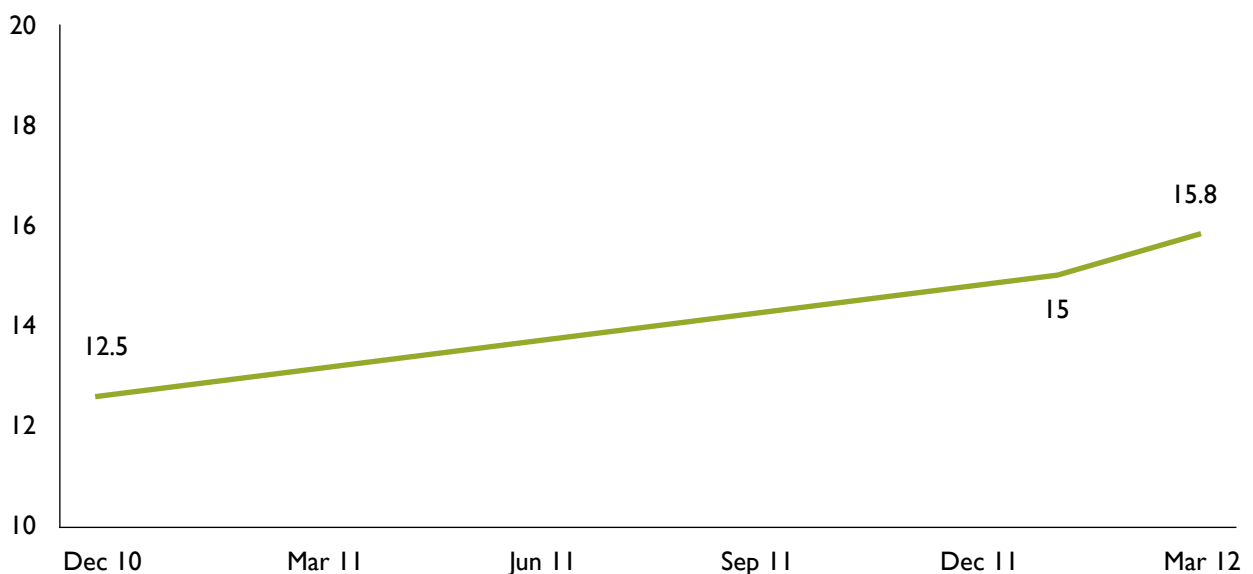
2.5 We know that along with education, good health is essential to help young children to progress in early years of their life. We remain on course to achieve our ambitious recruitment target of an additional 4,200 health visitors to support families with young children, with over 1,600 new health workers expected to come out of training in September 2012, and the overall number of health visitors working with families to increase by 50% over the next four years.

Fair and Flexible Labour Market

2.6 For too long, as a country, we have failed to make the most of the skills, experience and talents of all our citizens. And despite the difficult financial decisions that needed to be taken, there is much we can do to make sure that our economy emerges stronger and fairer and operates in the interests of working people. We recognise it will take a huge effort to tear down the barriers some people face, but we are fully committed to it and are making good progress.

2.7 Women make up half the workforce in Britain, but are disproportionately under-represented in more senior positions. We are committed to remedying this imbalance and want to see more women in senior positions. Currently, women make up only 33% of managers, directors and senior officials and only 9.6% of FTSE 250 board members. We appointed Lord Davies to lead a review into the barriers to increasing more women on boards and are now working with business and others to ensure his recommendations are implemented effectively and we are seeing progress. Since February 2011, the number of all male boards has more than halved, down from 21 to 9, and the percentage of women board appointments to the FTSE 100 has doubled. Our aim is that at least half of appointments to public boards by 2015 should be women, and we remain on course to achieve 25% women on boards target by 2015.

Chart 1: Percentage of Women Directors in FTSE100 companies



Source: Professional Boards Forum BoardWatch. Data provided by BoardEx and The Female FTSE Board Report.

2.8 The increase in percentage of women on boards of top 100 companies is a positive step forward, but our aim is to ensure that every woman in Britain can achieve her potential. We established a Women's Business Council (WBC), chaired by Ruby McGregor-Smith, Chief Executive MITIE Group PLC, to provide advice to the Home Secretary, the Chancellor and to the Business Secretary on what the Government can do to maximise women's contribution to future economic growth. The WBC will provide recommendations on public policy that affects women in business and will seek to improve the business environment for women so as to maximise profit and success.

2.9 Our ambition is for everyone in Britain to be able to access and contribute to growth, where ever they live. The rural economy and specifically women living in rural areas have a role to play. To support the rural economy we are providing £2 million over the next three years to five Local Enterprise Partnerships to support women set up, or grow their business. The funding will support women's business networks, training and skills development, particularly around access to finance and leadership, small grants schemes, 'virtual' assistants and improved access to childcare.

2.10 We are also currently reviewing the barriers faced by some ethnic minority businesses in accessing finance. The evidence suggests that individuals from some minority ethnic groups are more likely to have their loan applications rejected than their White counterparts. The Department for Communities and Local Government is working with the British Banker's Association, ethnic minority business organisations, academics and others to identify what more could be done to ensure that such barriers can be overcome and will report on the outcomes of this review shortly.

2.11 Voluntary transparency, not compulsion, will deliver more effective long term change. By working closely with private and voluntary sector, we have developed a 'Think, Act, Report' (TAR) framework to encourage private and voluntary sector organisations with 150 employees or more to be more open about how they are helping women overcome barriers in the workplace. The (TAR) scheme was started in September 2011 and many leading companies such as Tesco, Unilever, Eversheds, GlaxoSmithKline, Ernst and Young, and BT have already committed to it. Businesses choose to take part, they choose the measures that are right for them – recognising that this will be different for each business – and decide for themselves what to report and how to do it. Over 50 organisations have already signed up to the Scheme, and we will continue to work with private and voluntary sector to ensure its success by, for example; increasing the percentage of employees within medium and large organisations acting on gender equality and reporting progress.

2.12 Businesses are adapting their working patterns to fit in with the needs of their staff and are reaping rewards, which makes sense in the current economic climate. Flexible working arrangements can also help create conditions that lead to innovative and modern workplaces. Last year we consulted on changes to employment law to encourage a more fair and flexible approach at work. We are currently reviewing the responses and will publish our response to the flexible working elements of the consultation in due course. We are also considering whether any legislative changes are needed to extend the right to request flexible working and the shared parental leave. We have already provided flexibility to older workers, most of whom want to carry on working beyond the default retirement age, by allowing them to remain in work if they want to and are capable.

Opening Up Public Services and Empowering Individuals and Communities

2.13 Devolving power, increasing transparency, and promoting greater participation in public, political and community life is the key aspiration of this Government. Despite some progress, there is still a long way to go to ensure everyone can participate in public, political and community life. For instance, while the proportion of women and ethnic minorities has increased in the Westminster Parliament, disabled people and other groups are still under-represented in our democratic structures. We are supporting disabled people who want to seek elected office through the development of an Access to Elected Office programme. Following a consultation in 2011, we are working with political, disability and other stakeholders on establishing a dedicated fund to help individual candidates with disability related costs, new training and development opportunities, raising awareness, and with political parties regarding the sharing of good practice on disability awareness and legal obligations.

2.14 We also want to enable and encourage disabled people to lead independent lives. We have, therefore, protected funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). This will increase in line with inflation to £185 million in 2014-15. We are also on course to provide personal budgets for everyone who is eligible by April 2013. This would mean approximately one million people will receive direct payments or personal budgets by 2013, up from just over 430,000 at the moment. We are currently testing the Right to Control which will allow disabled people a legal right to choice and control over how they receive support – leading them to live more independently and be treated in the way they would prefer.

2.15 Along with disabled people, women and people from ethnic minorities, it is important that we utilise every possible opportunity to increase participation amongst young people in public and community activities. We want to use the Olympics later this year to inspire a new era amongst young people towards inclusion and equality. We have committed to investing £1 billion in a five-year youth and community sport strategy to secure a lasting legacy from London 2012 with a strong focus on providing the necessary opportunities and infrastructure for young people. Around £450 million will go to sport's National Governing Bodies between 2013 and 2017 for their Whole Sport Plans.

Changing Culture and Attitudes

2.16 Changing culture and attitudes of small business, policy makers, public servants and the public is fundamental to achieving our longer term ambition of a fairer society.

2.17 We are continuing to work with a range of partners to find innovative ways to tackle prejudice-based bullying in society, with particular emphasis on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGB&T). In March 2011, we published the first ever action plan to tackle discrimination and disadvantage faced by LGB&T people, and followed this up, in December, with a specific action plan to advance equality for transgender people. To complement the LGB&T action plan we also launched the first ever Sports Charter, to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport, and to date we have had over 40 National Governing Sporting Bodies and over 3,500 sports stars, fans and clubs signed up, including all professional football clubs.

2.18 The Government is committed to combating violence and discrimination against LGB&T people in all circumstances, in the UK and abroad. We are proud that the UK is now recognised by the International Lesbian and Gay Association as the best country in Europe on LGB&T equality and rights. We recently hosted a landmark European conference on LGB&T rights, with representatives from 41 countries, to press for progress in combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity and we will continue to work with other countries to overcome the barriers which prevent UK civil partnerships from being recognised abroad.

2.19 We want to take specific action to tackle specific problems, and the Gypsy and Traveller community face a wide range of inequalities and poor social outcomes. We set up a dedicated Ministerial Group in November 2011 to drive action across Government to help improve the life chances of Gypsies and Traveller communities. In April 2012, the Ministerial Group published a progress report which includes 28 commitments from across Government that will help mainstream services work more effectively with these communities.

2.20 Attitudes and culture are clearly changing in Britain, but still huge efforts are required to create a country where everyone feels valued. Research undertaken by Ipsos MORI shows that 50% of women feel under pressure to look good at all times and 46% feel under pressure to lose weight. Girlguiding UK research indicates that over half of teenage girls say the pressure to look like a celebrity causes them stress. We are committed to tackling the causes of negative body image and have convened a group of experts from the private and voluntary sectors to identify non-legislative solutions. For instance, we worked with Media Smart, a not-for-profit media literacy organisation, to launch a teaching pack for primary schools to help children understand how images in the media and advertising are altered and the impact this can have on their self esteem – this pack has been downloaded over 1000 times in the first six months; and we have also worked with the Professional Publishers Association to develop an industry award for magazines to recognise and reward best practice for body image diversity.

2.21 In March 2011 we published an action plan to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) with 88 actions across 12 Government Departments. We have already delivered more than one-third of the commitments with the remaining on track to be delivered soon. We have also committed £28 million of funding for specialist VAWG services, a further £10.5 million over next three years for new rape support centres and £900,000 for domestic violence helplines until 2015.

2.22 We want all our citizens to feel safe, and we are committed to tackle and eliminate all types of hate crime and the violence that often accompanies it. From April 2011, we have made it compulsory for police forces within England and Wales to collect data on reported hate crimes as part of the formal Annual Data Return process to the Home Office. This data will be published for the first time as National Statistics, in summer 2012. In March 2012, we also launched 'Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime'. This sets out our approach to tackle all forms of hate crime over the remainder of this parliament, including how we will deliver on our commitment to improve the reporting and recording of all hate crimes.

2.23 We will continue to take tough action against those who are breaking the law, but we also want to make sure that those who are not convicted or are falsely accused are not disadvantaged or discriminated. The new Protection of Freedoms Act amends previous legislation to vastly reduce the number of people on the National DNA database who have not been convicted. However, we will ensure that safety of the public is not compromised at any time and will ensure that all of those with convictions in the past for serious offences have a DNA profile on the database, ensuring maximum protection of the public from these individuals.

Making it Happen

2.24 An equality strategy will not in itself help to make our values of freedom, fairness and responsibility, real; it requires a concerted effort from Government and the wider public sector to put effective and proportionate policies into effect, Business also has a role to play, as does the voluntary sector, and oversight from an effective equality body.

2.25 We will radically reform the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to focus on delivering its core functions, and on 15 May 2012 we announced our proposals for reform following last year's consultation. We want the EHRC to focus on the areas where it can add value – as an independent equality body and an 'A-rated' National Human Rights Institution. We have decided to scrap vague, unnecessary and obsolete provisions from the Equality Act 2006 to focus the EHRC on its core functions as a national expert on human rights, and strategic enforcer of the law and guardian of legal rights. We have already implemented a new Framework Document which clarifies the relationship between the EHRC and Government and establishes tighter financial controls putting the EHRC in a stronger position to demonstrate value for taxpayers' money.

2.26 A requirement to consider equality does not necessarily lead to appropriate action or positive, proportionate change. There was widespread support in Parliament for the public sector Equality Duty during the passage of the Equality Bill. However, the proposed specific duties, which underpin the Equality Duty, would have imposed burdens on public bodies which were at odds with Government's new approach. We dramatically streamlined them to require public bodies only to set equality objectives and to publish information about how they are meeting the Equality Duty.

2.27 We planned to review the Equality Duty and the specific duties, and are bringing these reviews forward to understand whether the Equality Duty is working as intended. On 15 May 2012, we announced that this review will be completed by April 2013.

2.28 We recognise that addressing issues around equality, disadvantage and discrimination takes a concerted and joined up work across government. The Social Justice Strategy sets out new ways of preventing and tackling multiple disadvantages. The approach to addressing stalled social mobility will focus on opening doors and offering opportunities to all and not just those who know the right people and have contacts. We have engaged extensively with disabled people to hear their views about the barriers to be addressed, and to get their ideas for removing these. A new cross-Government Disability Strategy will set out how we will work across all sectors to remove barriers for disabled people.

2.29 Our communities are stronger when different people not only treat each other with respect, but contribute together. Integration is achieved when neighbourhoods, families and individuals come together on issues which matter to them. We all have a role to play in creating an integrated society and 'Creating the Conditions for Integration', published February 2012, sets out the approach. These complementary programmes will help create a society based on equality of opportunity and equality of treatment.

3. Next Steps

3.1 In moving forward, we want to maintain our new approach by taking specific action to tackle specific problems. We want to focus our activities in advancing equality of opportunities and equal treatment on those that are most disadvantaged or left behind in society. We know some groups face a wide range of long standing, inter-generational and deep rooted inequalities and that they achieve poor social outcomes. We will target our activities to provide these groups with real opportunities and make a better life for those who are unable to progress.

3.2 We have implemented the Equality Act 2010, where it is clear that its provisions are effective and proportionate; they reduce the burden of excessive red tape and are targeted on impact. The Red Tape Challenge (RTC) was an opportunity to examine the regulations in place and assess their effectiveness and relevance. On 15 May 2012 we announced the results of the Equality RTC review and announced our intention to scrap weak and ineffective measures like the Socio Economic Duty and Third Party Harassment and to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and burden on the public sector and the private sector.

3.3 We will intervene when it is appropriate and proportionate to do so and legislate where we think it is required and will help us achieve our equality aims. For instance, there is a considerable evidence of discrimination against older people in the health service. Older people also complain of unfair treatment in financial services, as do some younger people. We are therefore looking at a ban on age discrimination in goods, facilities, and services and have reached an agreement with the insurance industry to improve access and transparency for older people.

3.4 We are also consulting on enabling same-sex couples to have a civil marriage. We believe that marriage is one of the most important institutions we have. It binds us together, it brings stability and it makes this country stronger. The State should not stop people from getting married unless there are very good reasons and we believe that being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is not one of them.

3.5 The combined effort of this Government through the Social Justice Strategy, Social Mobility Strategy, Child Poverty Strategy, our approach to Integration, forthcoming Disability Strategy, and this Equality Strategy, will help us achieve our objective of eliminating discrimination and creating an environment where everyone is able to reach their potential. The Inter-Ministerial Group on Equalities, chaired by the Home Secretary, will continue to drive concerted effort across government to tear down barriers to equal opportunity.

Annex A:

Detailed progress on key commitments in the Equality Strategy

I. Early Years, Education and Social Mobility

Early Years

- We are on course to take 'Sure Start' back to its original purpose of improving life chances of disadvantaged children. Last year, we consulted on the core purpose of Children's Centres followed by a policy statement setting out the vision for reform with a clear aim of increasing voluntary and community sector involvement and accountability. We want to encourage Children's Centres to be innovative in designing services that are more effective in achieving the outcomes for the most disadvantaged children. To support innovation, we are currently testing a payments by results scheme to see if it strengthens the focus of local authorities and their partners on the core purpose of Children's Centres.
- We are on target to achieve the delivery of an additional 4,200 health visitors by 2015 to support families with young children.
- We are on track to introduce a new early year's education entitlement for two year olds, starting with the 20% most disadvantaged from September 2013 and extending to around 40% of two year olds by 2014-15 (around 260,000 children).
- We are taking forward the recommendations from Graham Allen's review into early years, and are currently looking into the best possible options to introduce the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), which will promote early interventions, and help spread best practice and evidenced-based programmes leading to demonstrable improvements in the social and emotional bedrock of children.

Education

- We established an Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) in 2011 with an upfront investment of £125 million, to fund bold and innovative ways to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in underperforming schools.

- In March 2011, we published a green paper 'Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability' proposing wide-ranging initiatives to improve outcomes for children and young people who are disabled or have Special Education Needs (SEN). On 15 May 2012, we published a response to the green paper, including a summary of the key responses to the consultation questions, progress to date and our further plans for the vision, in which children's special educational needs are picked up early and support is routinely put in place quickly; staff have the knowledge, understanding and skills to provide the right support for children and young people who have SEN or are disabled; parents know what they can reasonably expect their local school, local college, local authority and local services to provide, without them having to fight for it and; parents have greater control over the services they and their family use, with:
 - every family with an Education, Health and Care plan having the right to a personal budget for their support
 - parents whose children have an education, health and care plan having the right to seek a place at any state-funded school, whether that is a special or mainstream school, a maintained school, academy or Free School.
- We are currently piloting a new exclusion process placing greater emphasis on early intervention for pupils at risk of exclusion. External evaluation will focus on outcomes for disproportionately excluded groups, including Black Caribbean boys, and aim to identify examples of good practice. The first interim report is expected early next year.
- We published an anti-bullying advice in July 2011 which rationalises and simplifies current guidance to help head teachers tackle all forms of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. The guidance lists key organisations with a proven track record in dealing with specific forms of bullying, including Stonewall, Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) and Schools Out.
- We have introduced a fairer system for funding university education and established a new £150 million National Scholarship Programme to help bright students from poorer backgrounds go to university. Graduates on the lowest incomes will pay less than they do now and nobody will have to pay fees until they have graduated and are earning more than £21,000.

Social Mobility

- In April 2011, we published a Social Mobility Strategy 'Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers', with particular focus on foundation and school years of a child. A report setting out progress achieved in implementing this strategy and next steps was published on 22 May 2012.
- In April 2011, we published the first ever national Child Poverty Strategy, setting out a new approach to tackling poverty for this Parliament and up to 2020, guaranteeing fairness and providing support to the most vulnerable. The Child Poverty Strategy included detailed consideration of Frank Field's recommendations for new life chances indicators.
- We introduced a new Pupil Premium to help schools support disadvantaged pupils. The Premium will provide schools with extra funding for each pupil known to be eligible for free school meals or in care for longer than six months. From 2012-13, eligibility for the Premium has been extended to pupils who have been registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years. Funding through the Premium will rise to £2.5 billion by 2014/15.

II. A Fair and Flexible Labour Market

Equal Pay and Progression

- In July 2011, we published research exploring barriers faced by employers in establishing LGB&T friendly workplaces. The recommendations included; stronger enforcement of legislation; helping employers to recognise the business benefits of LGB&T equality; creating parity across the equality strands; and better signposting of LGB&T information and guidance for employers on Government websites. The Government is already compliant with most of the recommendations and we are now looking at best possible options, without creating additional bureaucracy or burden on employers, for business to take them forward.
- In September 2011, we introduced a new 'Think, Act, Report' framework to encourage private and voluntary sector organisations with 150 or more employees to be more open about how they are helping women overcome barriers in the workplace. Over 50 organisations have already signed up to the Scheme, and we will continue to work with private and voluntary sector to ensure its success.
- We are currently implementing the recommendations from the review conducted by Lord Davies into barriers to increasing more women on boards, including a new diversity code for Executive Search Firms.
- The Education Act 2011 places a new duty on schools to secure access to impartial and independent careers guidance for every pupil in years 9-11 from September 2012. We are currently consulting on extending this duty down to year 8 and for 16-18 year olds studying in schools and further education institutions. Subject to the results of the consultation, we will amend the age range by regulations from September 2013. Statutory guidance, published on 26 March 2012, supports schools in planning for the introduction of this new duty. The guidance makes it clear that schools should secure independent, face-to-face careers guidance where it is considered the most appropriate form of support for pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with disabilities and special educational needs.

Modern Workplaces

- We have consulted on changes to employment law to encourage a more fair and flexible approach at work. The response to the flexible working elements of the consultation will be published in due course. We are also considering any legislative changes needed to extend the right to request flexible working and the shared parental leave which we would like to bring into force at the earliest possible opportunity.
- We are currently exploring how changes to the benefit system will create opportunities for people to find their way back into work. Therefore, when the Universal Credit launches in 2013, it will remove the distinction between in-work and out-of-work support, and will reduce the risks associated with moves into employment in the current system.
- We have provided flexibility to older workers, most of whom want to carry on working beyond the default retirement age, by allowing them to remain in work if they want to and if they are capable.

Getting On and Getting Ahead

- We have introduced a New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) to allow those who have been unemployed for more than six months to set up their own businesses.
- We have reformed the Access to Work, with disabled people now able to apply for jobs with funding already secured for any adaptations and equipment they will require. Disabled jobseekers are now able to find out immediately if they are eligible for the support by completing a short on-line questionnaire.

III. Opening up Public Services and Empowering Individuals and Communities

Devolving Power and Control

- We have protected funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) which will increase in line with inflation to £185 million in 2014-15. In addition, on 3 January 2012, an additional £20 million of funding for DFG was announced for 2011-12 bringing the total in year funding to £205 million that helped consolidate the key commitment to help disabled people to continue to live independently in their homes.
- We are currently testing the Right to Control which will give disabled people a legal right to choice and control over how they receive support – leading them to live more independently and be treated in the way they would prefer.

Widening Participation

- Good progress is being made in developing an Access to Elected Office programme to support disabled people who want to seek elected office. Following a consultation in 2011, we are currently working with political, disability and other stakeholders to establish a dedicated fund to help individual candidates with disability related costs, new training and development opportunities, raising awareness, and with political parties regarding the sharing of good practice on disability awareness and legal obligations.
- We have committed an investment of £1 billion in a five year youth and community sport strategy to secure a lasting legacy from London 2012 Olympics, with a strong focus on providing the necessary opportunities and infrastructure for young people. Around £450 million will go to sport's National Governing Bodies between 2013 and 2017 for their Whole Sport Plans.

IV. Changing Culture and Attitudes

Changing culture and attitudes

- In March 2011, we published the first ever action plan to tackle discrimination and disadvantage faced by LGB&T people. To compliment the LGB&T action plan, we launched the first ever Sports Charter, to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport.
- In December 2011, we published the first ever specific action plan for transgender people.
- We removed the ban in England and Wales on civil partnerships being registered on religious premises, by implementing section 202 of the Equality Act 2010. The proposals are entirely permissive and represent a step forward for both LGB equality and religious freedom. We announced that from December 2011, passports will be amended to include 'Parent 1 and Parent 2', as well as 'mother' and 'father', to make it easier to recognise same-sex parents.

- We have accepted the analysis and recommendations of the review conducted by Reg Bailey, Chief Executive of Mothers' Union, into the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood. We are now undertaking a full stock take of progress by December 2012, with a view to considering what further action is needed, including regulation if necessary.
- We have established an expert group which meets twice a year to find non-legislative solutions to tackling low levels of body confidence and to steer the direction of our body confidence campaign.
- We set up a dedicated Ministerial Group to drive action across Government to help improve the life chances of Gypsies and Traveller communities. In April 2012, the Ministerial Group published a progress report which includes 28 commitments from across Government that will help mainstream services work more effectively with these communities.

Tackling Violence and Hate Crime, and fairer criminal records

- In February 2011, we launched the True Vision Website (www.report-it.org.uk). The website acts as an information resource and online reporting facility for victims of hate crime. The site also directs people to other organisations who can offer further help and support.
- From April 2011, police forces in England and Wales started the formal collection of data on reported hate crimes. This data will be submitted to the Home Office as part of the Annual Data Return process and will be published as National Statistics for the first time in summer 2012.
- We hosted a Ministerial Seminar in July 2011, with key industry representatives to look at personal harm on the internet. There was collective acknowledgement that personal harm on the internet is a real issue, and agreement that Government, industry, and relevant agencies should work together to provide a cohesive response to prevent this type of behaviour online.
- On 10 October 2011, we announced the Government's intention to criminalise the breach of a Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO) and to consult on making forcing someone to marry a criminal offence. Subsequently, the consultation was launched on 12 December 2011 with a view to understand whether a specific criminal offence would help to combat forced marriage and, if so, how it would be formulated. It also sought views on how the Government might implement the criminalisation of breaches of the civil FMPOs. The responses to the consultation are currently being analysed.
- On 8 March 2012, we launched a refreshed action plan to tackle violence against women and girls. The new plan contains 100 actions to tackle violence against women and girls in the areas of prevention, provision of services, partnership working as well as justice outcomes and reducing the risk to victims.
- In March 2012, we published 'Challenge it, Report it, Stop it – The Government's Plan to tackle Hate Crime'. The Plan brings together the work of a wide range of Departments and agencies to: prevent hate crime happening in the first place; increase reporting and victims' access to support; and improve the operational response to hate crime over the remainder of this parliament.
- In March 2012, we also published findings from the 2010/11 British Crime Survey, which included a chapter on the extent of and perceptions towards hate crime. This supports our work to develop a better understanding of hate crime to ensure that resources to tackle hate crime are allocated appropriately.
- We introduced in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 an amendment to the Criminal Justice Act 2003 to automatically increase sentencing for hate crime directed at transgender people.
- We introduced a Protection of Freedoms Act which amends legislation to vastly reduce the number of people on the National DNA database who have not been convicted.

Promoting rights internationally

- In 2011, we raised LGB&T rights bilaterally, through the EU and through the UN Universal Periodic Review process with a number of countries including, Nigeria, Cameroon, Uganda, Malawi, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Papua New Guinea, Antigua and Barbados and Swaziland.
- In March 2012, we hosted a landmark conference on LGB&T rights at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. This provided an opportunity to discuss and share good practices on a number of practical issues, with key European Institutions and member States.
- We produced bespoke guidance for Border Agency officials on managing asylum claims brought on the grounds of sexual orientation. We have also carried out a thematic audit of decisions made in these cases and, in light of this, are working with corporate partners to determine whether further improvements can be made.
- In March 2011, we launched a strategic vision for girls and women on the centenary of International Women's Day. The Strategic Vision focuses on key development priorities which are: delay first pregnancy and support safe childbirth; get economic assets directly to girls and women; get girls through secondary school; and prevent violence against girls and women.
- We actively supported the 'UN Women', the United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women, to get it off to a good start by providing approximately £600k in transitional funding, with a further core funding of £10 million for 2011 and 2012.
- We submitted the 7th periodic report on implementation of the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.
- We submitted the first UK Government report to the United Nations on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

V. Making It Happen

More accountable and transparent public services

- We have moved public bodies away from bureaucratic processes towards promoting equality and delivering outcomes that make a real difference through the specific equality duties introduced in September 2011. The specific equality duties require public bodies to publish information on the equality results in their services and their workforce. But we want to go further and explore new and effective means to drive better equality results. Therefore, on 15 May 2012, we announced the review of the Equality Duty to see if it is working as intended.

Equality at the heart of government

- We have established a dedicated Inter Ministerial Group on Equalities which meets regularly and helps drive concerted effort across government to tear down barriers to equal opportunities. Since its inception in September 2010, the group has been instrumental in driving forward the equality agenda across government, especially the commitments in the Equality Strategy.
- The Government wants to create policies and deliver services which are catered to the needs of those who use them. This can only be achieved through listening and involving public and partners in the development of policies. Therefore, we undertook a large public consultation on strengthening women's voices in government, which attracted over 1,200 responses. As part of the consultation, we held twenty events to engage a wide cross-section of women from across the UK. The findings are currently being considered to develop programme of engagement, in particular the concerns and priorities that women identified.

- The Government is developing a new Disability Strategy aimed at enabling disabled people to fulfil their potential. The Government is committed to working with disabled people on the development of the Strategy and published a discussion document – ‘Fulfilling Potential’ – in December 2011 as the basis for discussions. A huge response was received and, through events and written feedback, over 5,000 disabled people have taken the opportunity to shape the approach. Work is continuing on the Strategy, which will be published later this year.
- We have implemented a new system of performance monitoring to ensure the EHRC are held to account for how it delivers against its business plan.

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