

# The Equality Strategy - Building a Fairer Britain

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## Foreword by the Minister for Women and Equalities



Equality is at the heart of this Coalition Government. It is fundamental to building a strong economy and a fair society; and in these difficult economic times equality is even more important. As we rebuild our economy it is essential that we make sure we benefit from the talents of everyone in the UK. As we take the difficult decisions necessary to tackle the UK's record deficit we are determined to do so fairly, protecting the most vulnerable and prioritising equal opportunities for all.

This strategy is built on two principles of equality: equal treatment and equal opportunity. As a country we have come a long way in the last fifty years: from the Equal Pay Act in 1970 to Civil Partnership Legislation in 2004; we are a more diverse and tolerant country, and we should be proud of that fact. But the reality remains that despite more and more legislation from government, too many people's life chances still depend on who they are or where they come from, not their effort or ability.

This strategy sets out a new approach to equality. One that recognises that we still need specific action to deal with specific problems, but that we need to move beyond defining people simply because they've ticked a box on a form. We will work with people, communities and businesses to empower them to enact change. We will take a new approach by tackling the causes of inequality as well as using targeted action to deal with its consequences. We will ensure accountability by shining the light of transparency on organisations, allowing their performance to be challenged and acting as a driver for change. Equality is key to all our work. That is why I have set up an inter-ministerial group to ensure that we continue to drive work to support this strategy across government, working closely with all those involved: this strategy is just the start of this work.

Equality underpins this coalition's guiding principles of freedom, fairness and responsibility. But in the end, it will take all of us working together to build the strong, modern and fair Britain that we all want to see.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Theresa May'.

**Theresa May**

Home Secretary and Minister for  
Women and Equalities

## Introduction

In our Coalition Agreement, this government committed to work together to tear down the barriers to social mobility and equal opportunities in Britain, and build a fairer society. No one should be held back because of who they are or their background. But, equally, no-one should be defined simply by these characteristics. We want a society where people are recognised for who they are and what they achieve, not where they are from.

We have some of the strongest equality legislation in Europe. Britain today is a far more diverse and tolerant society than it was a generation ago. That is something to be proud of. But legislation will only get us so far. New legislation and increased regulation has produced diminishing returns, and in recent years progress on equality has stalled and in some areas begun to reverse. Too often the word 'equality' has been misused and misunderstood because it has come to mean political correctness, social engineering, form filling and box ticking. That is why we are scrapping the last administration's socio-economic duty.

This strategy sets out a new approach to equalities, moving away from the identity politics of the past and to an approach recognising people's individuality. And it sets out a new role for government, moving beyond simply introducing more legislation, to promoting equality through transparency and behaviour change. Government will act as a catalyst and advocate for change, working with businesses, the voluntary sector and wider civil society to create equal opportunities.

## What we mean by equality

Equality can mean many different things to many different people. This strategy focuses on two principles of equality: equal treatment and equal opportunity.

It is not right or fair that people are discriminated against because of who they are or what they believe. So we need to stop that discrimination and change behaviour.

And it is not right or fair that the opportunities open to people are not based on their ambition, ability or hard work, but on who their parents are or where they live. So we need to break down the barriers that hold people back and give them the opportunities to succeed.

## Equality today

Ensuring everyone has the right to equality is a fundamental duty of any government and on this the UK has a record to be proud of. We have some of the strongest equality legislation in Europe, from the first Race Relations Act in 1965 and the Equal Pay Act in 1970 to the introduction of civil partnerships.

But while legislation has helped to enshrine people's rights in law, more than legislation is needed to change people's attitudes or behaviour to ensure those rights are not abused:

- Decades after equal pay laws were passed, women are paid over 12 per cent less than men across a range of sectors, increasing to 22 per cent when part-time workers are included<sup>1</sup>. The factors behind the gender pay gap are complex. Outdated expectations of

women's jobs and family roles, occupational segregation and traditional approaches to job design, coupled with a lack of flexibility in our systems of maternity and paternity pay and difficulties in finding flexible childcare, all contribute.

- Some ethnic groups have unemployment rates three times higher than white men.<sup>2</sup> Muslim men have the lowest employment rates compared with those of other major faiths or no faith.<sup>3</sup>
- Children who are perceived as 'different', such as disabled children, experience more bullying than others.<sup>4</sup>
- Over 70 homicides in England and Wales between 2007 and 2008, and 2009 and 2010 were charged as resulting from racially or religiously aggravated, transphobic or homophobic or disability-related hate crimes.<sup>5</sup>
- Despite disability discrimination legislation, around a third of disabled people experience difficulties in accessing goods or services, including health services. The employment rate of disabled people in Great Britain is far lower than the overall working-age population: 48.4 per cent compared to 72.2 per cent. Within that, some groups face even greater barriers to work, for example only 6.4 per cent of adults with learning disabilities who use social services are in work.<sup>6</sup>

We cannot tackle those issues simply by passing more legislation.

The gradual evolution of equality law led to a 'strand-based' approach to equality with different laws to protect different groups.

Putting people into different categories simply because they ticked a box on a form ignores their needs as an individual. At the same time, some people have been made to feel as if equality is not for them.

If legislation has been seen to be the route to equal treatment, money has often been seen as the solution to equality of opportunity. However, despite billions of pounds of government spending, many opportunities remain closed to the disadvantaged:

- The chances for children in lower income families of being socially mobile are lower in the UK than most international counterparts. By the age of seven, children with a higher social class background, but low assessed ability, overtake those from a lower social class background with high ability.<sup>7</sup>
- People are living longer, but men and women in the highest socio-economic group can expect to live up to seven years longer than those in the lower socio-economic groups.<sup>8</sup> Although infant mortality rates are at their lowest ever, black Caribbean and Pakistani babies are twice as likely to die in their first year than Bangladeshi or white British babies.<sup>9</sup>
- Persistent inequalities exist for some groups. For example, under 10 per cent of Gypsy and Traveller pupils attain five GCSEs or equivalent at A\*-C grades including English and maths compared with over 50 per cent for the average population.<sup>10</sup>
- Black Caribbean pupils are three times more likely to be permanently excluded than the school population as a whole.<sup>11</sup>

## Why equality matters

These inequalities matter to all of us. Failure to tackle discrimination and to provide equal opportunities, harms individuals, weakens our society and costs our economy. For example:

- the National Audit Office estimated that the overall cost to the economy from failure to fully use the talents of people from ethnic minorities could be around £8.6 billion annually;<sup>12</sup>
- the Women and Work Commission estimated the total potential benefits of increasing women's employment and tackling occupational gender segregation could be worth about £15 billion to £23 billion to the economy each year;<sup>13</sup>
- the economic cost of violence against women in the UK is estimated to be £37.6 billion annually.<sup>14</sup>

At a time of global economic pressures, equality becomes more, not less, important. We are committed to tackling Britain's record deficit now, so that the next generation does not have to pay for the mistakes of this generation, and we will protect and safeguard those services that are crucial to individuals' life chances.

We want a fair society where every child has the opportunity to progress as far as their talents will take them, not one in which people's chances are driven by where they come from, how others see them, or who their parents are. We need a labour market that draws on the talents of all, not one in which people are written off because of outdated perceptions. Our democratic structures and communities are stronger and more effective if all voices are included, and everyone has the chance to shape and influence the decisions that affect them.

## A new approach

This government has already taken steps to implement most of the Equality Act 2010 which simplifies the legislative framework, including those new provisions that will make a real difference and scrapping those, like the last administration's bureaucratic 'socio-economic duty' that create more bureaucracy, not greater equality. We will continue to make targeted interventions where there is clear evidence that legislation is needed. But while legislation has made a difference in the past, it is not a panacea for the continuing gaps in equality that we face.

This strategy sets out the Government's new approach to tackling inequality: one that moves away from treating people as groups or 'equality strands' and instead recognises that we are a nation of 62 million individuals.

Government will work with employers, employees and wider society as an advocate for change, instead of dictating what the right approach should be through rules and regulations. Many businesses are already ahead of government with policies that have pre-empted legislation and, in some areas, gone further than the law requires; and many voluntary sector bodies already have deep insight into the underlying causes and symptoms of inequality and how to work with individuals to address them. We will support people to make the right choices, help to create equal opportunities and use transparency to drive accountability. Legislation is only part of this approach.



While our priority for government spending is to deal with the UK's record deficit, ensuring future economic growth and prosperity, we recognise that money does matter when it comes to equality. But it is not in itself a solution. For money to make a real difference it must be targeted at the right places. Crucially, rather than simply dealing with the consequences of inequality, money must be targeted at dealing with the causes of inequality and the barriers to social mobility. Over the course of this spending period, despite the difficult decisions that have had to be taken, we have prioritised and will continue to prioritise interventions that will advance equality of opportunity and make the greatest difference to people's lives.

## Principles for change

Our approach will be based on five, related, supporting principles:

- **Creating equal opportunities for all:** moving from looking at solutions geared to special treatment for 'groups' to developing frameworks that help create fairness and opportunities for everyone by, for example, extending the right to request flexible working to all, and not simply those with caring responsibilities. Equal treatment and equal opportunities for all does not mean uniformity – it means giving everyone an equal right to be treated fairly as an individual, recognising both their needs and their talents and giving them an equal opportunity to progress.
- **Devolving power to people:** supporting everyone to participate in our democratic structures and communities, to access the services they need and shape their own lives. Instead of top-down targets we will devolve power, free up businesses, public services, the voluntary sector, communities and citizens to develop solutions, and promote good practice.
- **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 for all the people they serve. The reshaped public sector Equality Duty will require public bodies to publish more information on equality than before, and demonstrate how they are delivering improvement, replacing bureaucratic accountability with democratic accountability.
- **Supporting social action:** giving the voluntary sector and public sector professionals the freedom to work together to innovate and drive effective measures which build a more inclusive and cohesive society based on tolerance and respect for all. We will support and promote programmes which work effectively across social divides. For example, the National Citizen Service will bring together 16-year-olds from different backgrounds and around the country to become community volunteers and join in outdoor pursuits.
- **Embedding equality:** leading by example and embedding equality in everything we do in government as an integral part of our policies and programmes. We have made a start with the first-ever Ministerial Group on Equalities.

This strategy sets out how government will work with businesses, local communities, public services, the voluntary sector and others to drive real and sustainable change, and build a fairer society and stronger economy. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all the work across government on equalities, but a strategic framework that sets out this government's new approach. We will continue our dialogue with organisations and the public and publish a report in a year's time setting out what we have achieved and how we have built on what we have already achieved.

This strategy sets out the UK Government's commitment to tackling the barriers to equal opportunities and social mobility. It sets the framework for how equality will be a fundamental part of the Government's programmes across the UK. Some policies that are set out in this strategy will apply across the UK, some to Great Britain only, some to England and Wales and some to England only, depending on the topic.

The legislative foundation, in the form of the Equality Act 2010, applies broadly to Great Britain. Northern Ireland has its own equality legislation.

Within this framework, responsibility for delivery of many public services which are important to achieving greater equality is devolved. However, there are also many areas where responsibility is reserved. The detailed actions in this strategy will therefore be delivered in a manner that is appropriate to the division of responsibilities across the United Kingdom.

## Section 1: Early years, education and social mobility

***Aim: tackle deprivation and inequalities relating to family background, and improve social mobility.***

A child's early years and education have a profound influence on their life chances. But research shows that even by the time they start their first day at school, bright children from poor backgrounds have fallen behind children from affluent homes. Simply spending more money has not closed down the gap. Sure Start has made an important difference to families, but we want to focus it more effectively to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged families. Extra spending on education has gone hand in hand with more red tape and bureaucracy, leaving teachers with less time to focus on raising standards. And instead of helping people move out of poverty, our benefits system has trapped too many families and children in welfare dependency.

Increasing opportunity is not just about investing more money in public services. Parents have a huge role to play in ensuring their children get the best start. We need to strengthen communities, promote social capital and social mobility and ensure children develop the skills that they will need to get on in life.

### Action

#### *Early years*

Young children and families from the poorest backgrounds are often isolated and lack effective networks to support them in accessing opportunities. Services that work alongside, support and befriend struggling families can have a powerful effect.

We will:

- promote the creation of new community-led public services, learning from organisations such as the National Childbirth Trust which works with single, teenage mothers to spread knowledge and good practice;
- fund an additional 4,200 health visitors to support families with young children;
- extend free early years education to all disadvantaged 2-year-olds from 2013;
- take Sure Start back to its original purpose of improving the life chances of disadvantaged children. Sure Start services will target early intervention on the most disadvantaged or at risk young families; and
- consider the recommendations of Graham Allen's Review of Early Intervention whose interim report is due in January 2011.

#### *Schools and young people*

Schools will receive increased funding for pupils from a deprived background and decide how best to use the funding for pupils, as they are best placed to understand their pupils' needs.

We will:

- introduce a Pupil Premium from 2011–2012 to enable the poorest children to receive the support they need to reach their potential and incentivise good schools to take on pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds. The Pupil Premium will provide additional funding, worth £2.5 billion by 2014–2015 and be allocated entirely to schools;
- be transparent in accounting for the Pupil Premium, with schools reporting to parents how they have used the Pupil Premium so parents can hold the schools to account;

- ensure school leaders have the freedom to innovate, the powers to maintain discipline fairly and are encouraged to share with other schools what they have learned in addressing the causes of inequality;
- support schools with the latest research, including into the underlying issues associated with the higher rate of exclusions of African Caribbean boys;
- establish an Education Endowment Fund, to fund bold and innovative ways to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in underperforming schools, in response to bids from schools, local authorities, parents, voluntary and community sector organisations, charities and social enterprises;
- set up a new Ministerial Working Group to drive action across government to tackle the wide range of inequalities and poor social outcomes experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. Forty-eight local authorities are already offering targeted support to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils;
- set out next steps for Special Education Needs (SEN) and Disabilities, including early identification and assessment, funding, family support and school choice, in a Green Paper to be published at the end of 2010; and
- support young people's transitions to adulthood by raising the participation age in education to 18 by 2015, providing opportunities for volunteering and personal and social development through National Citizen Service, and targeted support for vulnerable young people through the Early Intervention Grant. The fairness premium also includes a new £150 million National Scholarship fund to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

[Note: we set out what we are doing to address bullying in schools in Section 4.]

### *Poverty, work and social mobility*

We are committed to the aspiration of ending child poverty in the UK by 2020 as set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010 and will publish a child poverty strategy next spring. This will include a breakdown of the children with the highest risks of poverty and disadvantage, including some ethnic minorities; asylum seekers and refugees; disabled children and children in families with a disabled sibling or parent; and children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families.

- The Government has appointed Frank Field MP to lead an independent review into poverty and life chances. The review will explore how a child's home environment affects their chances of being ready to take full advantage of their schooling and recommend potential action by government and other institutions to reduce poverty and enhance life chances for the least advantaged, consistent with the Government's fiscal strategy; and to examine the case for reforms to the poverty measures.
- We have exempted the lowest paid public sector workers from the pay freeze and next April we will take 880,000 of the lowest paid workers out of income tax altogether.
- In the meantime, above-inflation increases in the Child Tax Credit will ensure that the measures to tackle the deficit in the Emergency Budget and Spending Review will not lead to any measurable increase in child poverty over the next two years.

Unlocking social mobility is at the heart of the Government's agenda. The Deputy Prime Minister has set up an informal Ministerial group on social mobility to ensure cross-government commitment and action:

- Alan Milburn has been appointed as Independent Reviewer on social mobility and he will undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of the Government's actions and the contributions made by wider society, including employers and community organisations; and
- we will publish a social mobility strategy by February 2011.

## Section 2: A fair and flexible labour market

***Aim: work with business to develop a fairer and more flexible labour market that draws on the talents of all and builds a strong economy.***

Building a stronger Britain means making sure that we draw on the talents of all and that everyone who can work has real opportunities to work. To do this, we need to work with business to address the main challenges to equality in the workplace, namely: fair access to the labour market; a more flexible and inclusive labour market; and equal pay and equal opportunities for promotion and progression. We need to address outright discrimination in the workplace and tackle persistent cultural attitudes that place barriers to individuals entering and progressing in the workplace because of outdated and misplaced assumptions and practices.

We have the legislation in place to tackle outright discrimination and we need to work to enforce this, and make the current law easy to understand and implement. Behavioural insights could help us address cultural attitudes. For example, we know that some people have intrinsic bias about male and female capabilities, which impacts negatively on women's career advancement<sup>15</sup>. Just 5 per cent of the gender pay gap is due to skills while a far greater proportion (22 per cent) is due to the different occupations and industries in which men and women work<sup>16, 17</sup>.

### Action

#### *Equal pay and progression*

Making pay transparent is the first step to making it fair, working towards a new social norm where it is more acceptable to discuss pay and reveal what people earn. Government can lead by example in this and reward good practice. We will:

- lead by example in promoting transparency and good practice in the public sector. The new specific duties made to support the public sector Equality Duty will require large public bodies to be transparent about the make-up of their employees, to give the public the information they need to hold organisations to account and promote change. For example, as part of this, we will strongly encourage them to include information on their gender pay gap;
- work with business and others to develop a voluntary scheme for gender pay reporting in the private and voluntary sector which will be available to all private and voluntary sector businesses, but particularly those with 150 or more employees. We expect and want the voluntary approach to work. This will give better information and is more likely to drive successful change. We will annually review the numbers of companies releasing information, and its quality, under the voluntary approach to assess whether this approach is successful and take a view over time whether alternatives are required, including using a mandatory approach through section 78 of the Equality Act 2010. While we work with business and others to ensure the voluntary approach is successful, we will not commence, amend or repeal section 78;

- work with regulators and business trade organisations to shine a light on those who are promoting equality well and those who are not doing well;
- take strong action where there is evidence of discrimination, for example, against women on pay, where we will shortly set out our approach in a consultation document;
- improve careers advice for girls, women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and others who can be disadvantaged by occupational segregation, to help ensure that they are aware of the options open to them;
- from April 2011, allow employers, on a permissive basis, to apply voluntary positive action in recruitment and promotion processes when faced with two or more candidates of equal merit, to address under-representation in the workforce. This does not mean 'quotas' or giving someone a job just because they are a woman, disabled or from an ethnic minority – positive discrimination is not acceptable and is unlawful;
- work with business to develop business-led measures to promote more women on to the boards of listed companies. Lord Davies is currently undertaking a review into the lack of female representation on corporate and business boards and will report back early next year;
- lead by example. We have set a new aspiration that 50 per cent of all new appointments to public boards will be women by the end of the current Parliament. This aspiration will be underpinned by a comprehensive work programme, developing more structured strategic relationships at board level with FTSE Companies and other business networks;
- publish research which explores the barriers that employers face in establishing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) friendly workplaces. We will work with business to consider the report's recommendations and take steps to improve LGB&T equality in the workplace.

### *Modern workplaces*

Inflexible working patterns are a barrier for many. The best businesses already understand that offering flexible working makes good business sense, helping to attract and retain the best staff. Flexible working allows all businesses to adapt their working patterns to fit their needs, rather than just conforming to the traditional 9–5. Some of Britain's most innovative and successful small and medium-sized enterprises are showing that flexible working is good for their businesses as well. And flexible working can benefit all staff, not just those with caring responsibilities, from faith communities with different religious leave needs, through to helping older people manage the transition between work and retirement. We will:

- extend the right to request flexible working to all employees, promoting flexible working as sensible business practice rather than special treatment. We will consult with businesses and the public as we develop our proposals;
- promote innovative ways to help people find out about opportunities that meet their needs, building on examples such as Women Like Us, a social enterprise which runs a recruitment service that specialises in part-time jobs and works with employers to design part-time jobs that benefit their business;



- look at how the new Universal Credit can support non-traditional work patterns such as 'mini jobs' that can often be the first step back into work;
- encourage shared parenting from the earliest stage of pregnancy, and consult on a new system of flexible parental leave, allowing parents of all types of families to share leave between them;
- phase out the Default Retirement Age, allowing older workers to remain in work if they want to and are capable. We have recently sought views on our proposals and will respond to the consultation by the end of 2010;
- consider how the provisions in the Equality Act to ban age discrimination in the provision of services and exercise of public functions can be implemented in the best way for business and others affected. There would need to be a full public consultation on exceptions to the ban on age discrimination, to ensure that beneficial or justifiable age-based treatment can continue.

### Case Study

Botanic Inns is one of Northern Ireland's leading hospitality and entertainment providers, with a workforce of some 600 staff and 17 bar and restaurant outlets, including 2 hotels. The hospitality industry is associated with high labour turnover and unsociable hours. The company recognised this had a considerable impact on the business and on family life.

They also recognised that skilled staff who enjoyed working in the hospitality sector and could offer significant benefits to an employer, were sometimes inhibited from remaining in the industry given the nature of the work and working hours. Recognising this, the company developed a competitive benefits package, including flexible working made available to everyone. The options included compressed working weeks, term-time working, flexitime, part time, career breaks and working from home where the job allowed it. As a result, the company has maintained a high degree of retention with staff reaching 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and for the first time this year, 30 years service! The company has also attained and retained Investors in People Accreditation and won numerous organisational awards, including Best Multiple Operator at the UK-wide Publican Awards. Dominic McGeown, head of human resources said: "Flexible working, if managed effectively, can pay huge dividends both on an individual basis and on company profitability. It's an age old cliché, but if our staff are happy, our customers will be happy and that is the winning recipe for their return, time after time! Flexible working is about agreement and compromise and should not be an inhibiting factor for the individual staff member or for the company"<sup>18</sup>.



## Getting on and getting ahead

For those who are able to work, work is the best route out of poverty. The Government will give all those who can work the support that they need to get into, and stay in work, and in return expect people to take up the opportunities open to them. We will:

- introduce a new Work Programme by summer 2011. It will offer personalised support to a range of people – from Jobseeker’s Allowance recipients who have been out of work for some time, to those who may previously have been receiving Incapacity Benefit for years;
- introduce a new Universal Credit from 2013, designed to simplify the benefits system, offer an incentive to work and reduce the risk of making the transition into paid work;
- support people who have been unemployed for more than six months and want to set up their own business through the New Enterprise Allowance. Initially, the New Enterprise Allowance will be available in those areas which face the greatest unemployment challenge;
- reform Access to Work so disabled people can apply for jobs with funding already secured for any adaptations and equipment they will need; and
- provide improved specialist support for disabled people through Work Choice, to support those facing complex barriers to employment which cannot be met through the Work Programme.

### Case Study

Ian, 43, has a learning disability and does not use many words. He spent most of his life in segregated services. But six years ago, with support from supported employment agency Pure Innovations (a social enterprise), he got a job with catering company SSP at Manchester Airport. He now works 18 hours per week and can afford to live independently and go on holidays. Ian says: “I really like the people I work with and my wage”. His sister says: “Having a job really makes him feel part of society.”

## Section 3: Opening up public services and empowering individuals and communities

***Aim: Devolving power to local communities and promoting greater participation and inclusion in public, political and community life.***

We are committed to devolving power and control to citizens and local communities. We will open up public services to local community groups, give citizens more choice and control in their daily lives and promote greater participation in public life. Ensuring everyone has a voice in our democratic institutions, civil society and local communities, makes Britain's democracy stronger, improves accountability and gives all our citizens the chance to influence and shape the decisions that affect their daily lives.

Despite progress, there is more to do to ensure everyone can participate in public, political and community life. For example, while the proportion of women and ethnic minorities in the Westminster Parliament increased following the 2010 general election, women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and others are still under-represented in our democratic structures.<sup>19</sup>

Increasing participation will enable communities to create services which are designed by the people who will use them.

### Action

#### *Devolving power and control*

This government recognises the significant and valuable contribution that faith groups, local community groups, charities and civic organisations make to society. We will empower them to become more involved in delivering

public services. These groups are often better at drawing in under-represented people than government, opening up delivery of public services to a broader range of participants. And we will give individuals themselves more choice and control over the services that they receive. Services which are designed by the people who use them are more appropriate for individuals, more responsive to their needs and more effective in delivering the outcomes we want. We will:

- open up delivery of public services to local community groups, charities, faith groups, and other civic organisations;
- provide a £100 million Transition Fund to help those voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, cooperatives and user-led groups in England who can provide public services, manage transition to a tighter funding environment and a new way of working with the public sector;
- through the Government's *Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens*, launched on 16 November 2010, challenge councils to provide personal budgets, preferably as direct payments, for everyone who is eligible by April 2013. This would mean approximately one million people would receive direct payments or personal budgets – up from 216,000 at the moment;
- test the Right to Control in five initial Trailblazer areas from December 2010. Disabled people taking part will have a legal right to be told how much support they are eligible to receive, to decide and agree the outcomes they want to achieve and will have choice and control over how they receive support;

- protect funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant, helping maintain the independence of many disabled people by providing support for adaptations such as stair lifts, walk-in showers and extensions to their home.

### *Case Study*

Cardinal Hume Centre in London works with homeless young people, families with housing needs, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants helping them to obtain employment and break out of the cycle of homelessness and social exclusion. Through providing a full range of services – accommodation, practical and emotional support, healthcare and counselling, education, training and employment advice all on one site, they help young people to make their own choices, enabling them to find a future they can call their own.

### *Widening participation*

We are committed to promoting greater participation in public life. To do this, we must remove the barriers to full participation. We will:

- train a new generation of community organisers to work with communities to catalyse social action;
- under the National Citizen Service programme, pilot a structured summer programme to give young people from all backgrounds and abilities an opportunity to develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds and start getting involved in their communities;
- provide extra support to tackle the particular obstacles faced by disabled people who want to become MPs, councillors or other elected officials; and
- consider ways to support LGB&T people to get more involved in their community – ranging from becoming a school governor to standing for Parliament – based on research due to be published later this year on the barriers that LGB&T people face when they want to participate in civil society.

We will also:

- work with the Mayor of London to ensure a safe and successful Olympic and Paralympics Games, and a lasting legacy that promotes inclusion and encourages wider participation in sport among all sections of society across the whole of the UK;
- inspire a generation of young people to get involved in competitive school sport through the new Olympic and Paralympic-style competition. This will give all schools (mainstream and special) and all pupils (including those with disabilities or special educational needs) the opportunity to get involved; and
- ensure a wider sporting, social and economic legacy from London 2012 across the UK and inspire a new era in public attitudes towards inclusion and equality. In particular, we are committed to using the opportunity of the Paralympic Games to help change attitudes and perceptions towards disabled people.

## Section 4: Changing culture and attitudes

### ***Aim: building respect for all, tackling discrimination, hate crime and violence.***

The message of this government is clear – this is a society where discrimination is not tolerated and those who seek to undermine communities through fomenting hatred and division will be challenged. Attitudes are changing. We are a more diverse and fairer society: the citizenship survey found that 85 per cent of respondents agreed that people from different backgrounds in their local area get on well together.<sup>20</sup>

But the sad reality remains that too many people are victims of discrimination and hate crime in the UK today. We have strong legislation designed to tackle discrimination and hate crime, and we will continue to ensure that tough action is taken where people break the law. But legislation alone will not be able to change the attitudes that lie behind this behaviour. We will work with communities to promote positive interactions, build connections and trust between people.

### **Changing cultures and attitudes**

Challenging and changing attitudes among young people is key to ensuring we continue to become a more tolerant society. Government needs to lead by example. We will:

- introduce the new Equality Duty, which will require all public bodies to have due regard to the need to foster good relations between different groups. We will issue clear guidance so that organisations know what they need to do on this;
- work with anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record of tackling prejudice-based bullying, to support schools in tackling all forms of bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying. We will reinforce this through our streamlined guidance on bullying and have included action to tackle bullying in the Schools White paper;
- work with governing bodies of different sports to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport;
- publish research on how to prevent and respond to the bullying of disabled children and children with Special Education Needs (SEN);
- crack down on irresponsible advertising and marketing, especially to children, and take steps to tackle the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood; and
- bring together a group of experts to work to identify non-legislative solutions to tackling low levels of body confidence.

### **Tackling violence and hate crime**

We are committed to putting in place more effective measures to tackle hate crime and the violence that often accompanies it. We will:

- promote better recording of all hate crimes, but particularly those which at present are often not centrally recorded, for example, against disabled people and LGB&T people;
- encourage those who experience hate crime to report it;
- continue to work with the Government's Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime. Membership includes advisors on race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity issues;

- continue to be alert to crimes being committed against members of all faith communities and work with local communities to take appropriate steps to safeguard people and property;
- promote good practice in responding to all forms of hate crime – for example, as part of government’s wider approach to tackling internet crime, we will be hosting a ministerial seminar on effective action to tackle hatred perpetrated over the Internet; and
- publish a full cross-government action plan to tackle violence against women and girls in the spring. We have already committed to putting funding for rape crisis centres on a stable basis, with money for new centres where there are gaps in provision.
- change the law so people with historical convictions for consensual gay sex with over 16s can apply for their record to be deleted from the Police National Computer, ensuring it no longer has to be declared and will not show up on criminal record checks; and
- review the regime for the management of criminal records, the process for disclosure and the vetting and barring regime to scale it back to common sense levels.

### **Fairer criminal records**

We will address unfairness in the way we retain and use criminal information. The National DNA Database contains a greater proportion of young black men than in the general population because proportionately more are arrested, charged and convicted. But over-representation is greater at arrest than at conviction. We will:

- adopt the protections of the Scottish model of DNA retention, vastly reducing the numbers on the National DNA database who have not been convicted. We will also 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;

### **A more inclusive society**

Over 40,000 couples in the UK have taken the important step to register their relationship as a civil partnership, gaining vital legal rights, responsibilities and protections where previously they had none. We are talking to those with a key interest in this issue, including representatives of faith and lesbian, gay and bisexual groups, about what the next stage should be for civil partnerships, and including how some religious organisations can allow same-sex couples the opportunity to register their relationship in a religious setting if they wish to do so.

### **Promoting rights internationally**

Almost one in ten British citizens lives, works or studies abroad; more than ever before.<sup>21</sup> We will work to protect and promote the rights of British citizens abroad and use our influence to change culture and attitudes and promote equality, leading by example. We will:

- use our UK representation at European Union (EU), United Nations (UN), Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Commonwealth meetings to promote equality;

- update the list of overseas same-sex partnerships automatically recognised by the UK as equivalent to UK civil partnerships and work bilaterally with other European countries to overcome the legislative or policy barriers which prevent them recognising UK civil partnerships;
- proactively question 42 Commonwealth countries which retain homophobic legislation<sup>22</sup>, with a particular focus on those countries which have the death penalty for homosexual acts;
- continue to push for universal ratification and implementation of the UN conventions on racial discrimination and discrimination against women, and those promoting the rights of children and disabled people<sup>23</sup> – and set a good example through our domestic implementation of these conventions and through the periodic reporting system;
- stop the deportation of asylum seekers who have had to leave particular countries because their sexual orientation or gender identity puts them at proven risk of imprisonment, torture or execution;
- recognise the vital role of women in development, and seek to increase the number of women and girls in education; improve maternal health and access to family planning; improve economic empowerment of women through jobs; promote gender equality; and focus on the rights of women, children and disabled people to access services; and
- Work with UN Women to ensure it focuses on key priorities, including violence against women and the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals, and delivers real progress for women and girls worldwide.



## Section 5: Making it happen

***Aim: the public sector will lead by example and empower citizens and communities with the information they need to hold services to account.***

This strategy sets out a new direction and that means a new role for the public sector with government focusing on transparency, accountability and empowerment.

### More accountable and transparent public services

Underpinning our work on fairness is our commitment to transparency and devolving power to the public. Through transparency, the public will be able to hold those delivering public services to account. We will:

- introduce the new public sector Equality Duty. Through this Duty we will remove the top-down targets and bureaucratic processes that the current duties entail and instead require public bodies to publish data on the equality results in their services and their workforce;
- introduce a new right to see data so that government-held data can be requested and used by the public and published;
- ensure information is accessible to all. Through the e-Accessibility Regulatory Framework, we are working with the IT Industry to ensure their products meet the needs of older and disabled people; and
- ensure that all government websites meet e-accessibility standards. We have developed and disseminated guidance for government staff on accessible and inclusive communications, including creating accessible consultations, video and easy read standards.

### Equality at the heart of government

We will put equality at the heart of government, ensuring that we lead by example, embed equalities across all departments and work in partnership with business, community groups and wider society to deliver tangible results.

We will:

- ensure every department continues to work to promote diversity, for example, through internship schemes to widen access to the civil service for those who are currently under-represented such as ethnic minorities and disabled people;
- listen to and involve the public and partners in the development of policy, including through a new strategy for engaging with women and women's organisations;
- involve older people in our work on age discrimination through the UK Advisory Forum on Ageing;
- continue to work with other expert groups such as the independent Ethnic Minority Advisory Group (EMAG), which works in partnership with government to provide advice on ethnic minority employment issues and has developed and published a free toolkit titled *5-Points for Progress*. It contains the key steps employers should take to recruit the best talent for their organisation, how to reduce employee turnover and reduce related costs;
- through the Office for Disability Issues, continue to work with Equality 2025 and to address the specific barriers that disabled people face due to the asymmetric nature of disability, involving disabled people in developing policy;

- implement the first ever cross-government programme to support LGB&T people. We also recognise there are specific issues that transgender people face and we will therefore work with transgender people to develop the first Government Action Plan on transgender equality next year;
- ensure child poverty concerns are built into policy-making across government, supported by the Child Poverty Unit, jointly sponsored by Department for Education (DfE), HM Treasury (HMT) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP);
- reform the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) so that it concentrates on its key roles as a modern regulator and as a national human rights institution; and
- ensure departments take responsibility for and ownership of progressing equality commitments. We have set up an Inter-Ministerial Group on Equalities to address common issues, oversee the implementation of this strategy and report annually on progress.

## Conclusion

Equality is not an add-on, but an integral part of this government's commitment to build a stronger economy and fairer society. This strategy sets out a new approach to delivering equality: one that moves away from treating people as groups or 'equality strands' and instead recognises that we are a nation of 62 million individuals.

Government will act as a leader, a catalyst and an advocate for change. We will continue to make targeted interventions where these will make a real difference, but on its own government can only ever make limited progress.

We will work with people, communities and businesses to empower them to enact change. Only if we do that; only if we work with the grain of human nature, not against it, will we achieve the fairer, more equal and more prosperous society that we all want to see.



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# Notes

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