

Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP Minister for Women and Equalities Secretary of State for Business and Trade President of the Board of Trade

Old Admiralty Building London SW1A 2BL

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Dear Public Authority Leaders,

As the Minister for Women and Equalities, I am writing to you as a leader of a public authority regarding your statutory duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty (the duty).

Public authorities should consider all individuals (including their own employees) when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy and in delivering services. The duty requires public authorities to ensure that equality issues are actively considered in order to remove or minimise disadvantage and to meet the needs of and encourage greater participation in public life by those with protected characteristics. As part of the Equality Act 2010 (the act), the Public Sector Equality Duty also requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to foster good relations between people who share and do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

At this moment in time, given the recent hostility towards the Jewish community and rise of anti-Muslim hatred, it is particularly important that public authorities take their duty to have due regard to the need to foster good relations seriously. Now more than ever, we need to see public authorities providing leadership in reducing prejudice and increasing understanding between different groups of people.

I wish to make it entirely clear that public authorities must provide leadership and remain steadfast in maintaining the legal obligations in the act. The act provides protection against discrimination, harassment, victimisation and unfair treatment associated with any of the protected characteristics it covers.

Many people are under the misconception that the act protects groups. It does not. It is about protected characteristics. It is important to remember that every single person has a protected characteristic therefore the act protects all individuals. The 9 protected characteristics in the act are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

I would like to be clear that there is no 'hierarchy of rights' under the act, therefore we should not hold one protected characteristic in higher regard than another.

To assist you in compliance with the duty, I attach updated Public Sector Equality Duty guidance. I would strongly advise you to re-familiarise yourself with your organisation's responsibilities by reviewing the updated guidance.

Yours sincerely,

RT HON KEMI BADENOCH MP

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Minister for Women and Equalities, Secretary of State for Business and Trade and President of the Board of Trade