



A law about making things better for people from different groups

Guide to the public sector equality duty



Equality and
Human Rights
Commission

Easy read



The Equality and Human Rights Commission

1



What this guide is about

3



What the law says

6



Asking people what they need

7



Equality information

9



Equality objectives

11



Finding out if changes have worked

13



Asking public authorities to change things

14



What next?

16



How to find out more

17



Some words in this guide and what they mean

18

The Equality and Human Rights Commission



The **Equality and Human Rights Commission** wrote this guide.



We work to make sure people of different ages and from different groups are treated fairly and equally.



We work to stop **discrimination**.

Discrimination means treating someone worse than other people for reasons like:

- being disabled



- because they are a man or a woman



- coming from a different race or culture.



We also want to make sure that people's **human rights** are respected.



Human rights are rights and freedoms that everyone should have.

What this guide is about



This guide is about a law called the **public sector equality duty** or the **equality duty**.



This law says **public authorities** like schools, hospitals and councils must think about how they can make things better for people from different groups.



The law covers lots of different groups including:

- disabled people



- men and women



- people from different races and cultures



- people of different ages



- straight, gay and lesbian people

Lesbian means a woman who is attracted to other women



Gay means a man who is attracted to other men



- people from different religions or people who do not have a religion



- women who are pregnant or have a new baby



- people who are married, or gay or lesbian people who have a civil partner

- transgender people



Transgender people are people who feel that the body they were born into is not right for them. This means they may want to change from being a man to a woman, or from a woman to a man.

Public authorities should try to understand the needs of people from different groups.

What the law says



The law says public authorities must think about how they can make sure that everyone has the same chance to use their services.

Schools, hospitals, councils, police, colleges, universities and government are all public authorities.



They must stop discrimination against people from different groups like gay people, disabled people or women.



They must make sure people are not bullied or called names because they are from a certain group. For example, because they are old or because of their religion.



They must make it easier for people from different groups to tell them what they need so that they have the right information when they make decisions.

Asking people what they need



Public authorities should take steps to understand what people from different groups need. This will help them to make their services better and to be better employers.



They should make it easy for people from different groups to tell them what they think.



They should make it easy for people from different groups to come to meetings.



For example:

- they should have meetings in places where people who use wheelchairs can get in easily



- there should be enough money to pay for meetings to find out what different groups of people think.



A public authority might ask you what they should do to make things better for people from different groups.



They might ask you on your own.



They might ask you as part of an organisation that works with people from different groups.

Equality information



This is when public authorities say how they are making things better for people from different groups:

- it might say what they did to find out what different groups of people think



- it should say what they are going to do to make their services better and to be a better employer



- it should say how they will know if their changes are working.



Public authorities must put equality information on their website and they should give the information to anyone who wants it.



They should make the information easy to find and easy to understand.



You can ask to see the information.

This is one way to find out if the public authority is making useful changes for people from different groups.

Equality objectives



The public authority must write **equality objectives**.

Equality objectives say what they will do to make things better for people from different groups.



The objectives should say:

- what are the most important changes that they will make for people from different groups



- who needs to make the changes



- when the changes will happen.

For example, they might have an objective:



- to make a service better



- to make their decisions better

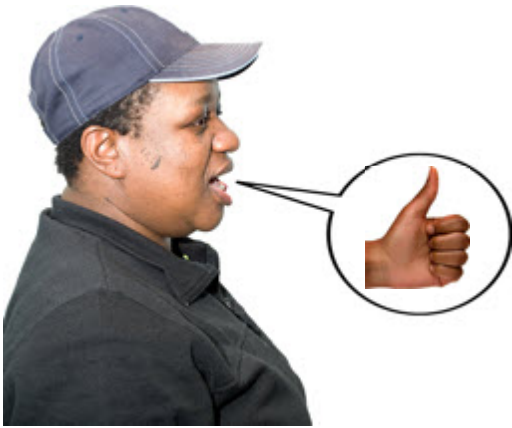


- to be a better employer.



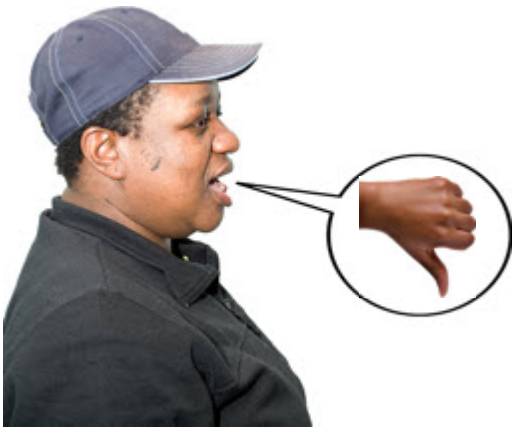
You can ask to see their objectives.

Finding out if changes have worked



Public authorities can ask people from different groups if the changes they are making have made things better for them.

- you can say what has worked well



- you could say what has not worked well



- you can say what they could do to make things work better next time.



For example, you could ask them to write Easy read information about their services and to put it on their website.

Asking public authorities to change things



If you think that a public authority is not thinking about how they can make things better for people from different groups, you or an organisation you work with can ask what they are doing for the equality duty.



Here are some questions you can ask:

- what are the most important changes they want to make for people from different groups?
- did they ask people from different groups what they thought about these changes?
- have things got better since the changes have been made?

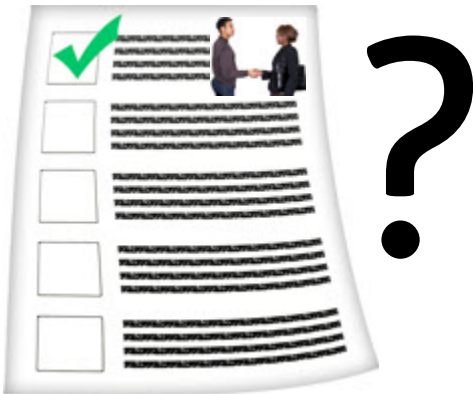




- what still needs to change to make sure that things get better for people from different groups?



- does the public authority have equality information?



- does the public authority have equality objectives?

What next?



If you think a public authority is not thinking about what they can do to make things better for people from different groups, you can telephone the **Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline**.



We can tell you what the law says.



We can tell you what to do next.



If you are in England

Telephone: **08456 046 610**

Textphone: **08456 046 620**

Fax: **08456 046 630**



If you are in Scotland

Telephone: **08456 045 510**



Textphone: **08456 045 520**



Fax: **08456 045 530**



If you are in Wales

Telephone: **08456 048 810**



Textphone: **08456 048 820**



Fax: **08456 048 830**

How to find out more



There is more information on our website:

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Some words in this guide and what they mean

Discrimination	Treating someone worse than other people for some reason.
Equality duty	A law that says public authorities need to think about how they can make things better for people from different groups.
Equality information	Information that says how public authorities are making things better for people from different groups.
Equality objectives	Things a public authority will do to make things better for people from different groups.
Public authorities	Places like schools, hospitals, councils, police, colleges, universities and government.

Credits



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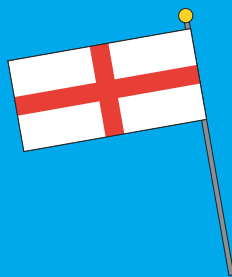


from our website
www.equalityhumanrights.com



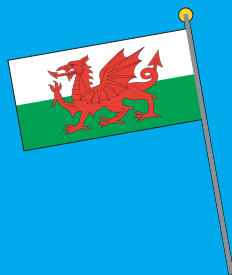
Telephone 1 of our helplines.

- They are open Monday to Friday
8am to 6pm.



England

- 08456 046 610
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Wales

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Scotland

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- Fax 08456 045 530