

## Policy Briefing 6

### Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011

Public bodies have new duties to publish equality information and objectives.

On 10th September the new “Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011” came into force, covering public bodies like councils, the police etc.

By 31st Jan 2012 (and then annually) public bodies must publish information to show how they are meeting the public sector equality duty (part of the Equality Act 2010). The duty says public bodies need to consider how they combat discrimination, and disadvantage, and encourage different communities to get on well with each other. Some public bodies, including schools, are being given until 6th April 2012 to publish this information. Public bodies with more than 150 employees will also have to publish information about their staff who share a ‘protected characteristic’ such as being lesbian, gay or bisexual.

By 6th April 2012 (and then every four years) public bodies will have to publish at least one equality objective it will work towards to achieve the public sector equality duty.

Both the objectives and equality information must be published in a way that is accessible to the public, but it can be as part of a larger document.

### What does this mean?

To publish ‘information’ and ‘equality objectives’ are intentionally vague. The current coalition Government hopes that public bodies will consider the problems different groups like lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans people face, as part of their day-to-day decision making. The Government wants local people and voluntary groups to challenge their local public bodies about what they do. This current Government feels the previous Labour Government set far too many rules and regulations for public bodies to follow at a national level, and wants more



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decisions to happen at a local level – this is called localism and is a key part of the changes this Government wants to make in lots of different areas. In education, health, planning and many other areas, this Government wants decisions to be made at a local rather than national or regional level.

This means that lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people and community groups will have to challenge bad public services in their areas. If you have had a bad experience with the police, your council, a school etc., as a lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans person, it is important to complain if you can. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is the body responsible for ensuring public bodies do what the law says about equality issues and can offer advice about challenging bad public services (<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>).

If you would like to contact The Lesbian & Gay Foundation you can email [adam.winter@lgf.org.uk](mailto:adam.winter@lgf.org.uk).

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