



# Publication of equality objectives: Key findings for government departments

## Introduction

### The equality duty

Government departments have a general duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This general duty is supported by specific duties and in summary, listed public authorities in England are required to: publish information<sup>1</sup> to demonstrate compliance with the general duty, at least annually, and to prepare and publish one or more objectives, at least every four years to achieve any of the aims in the general equality duty. The information and objectives must be published in a manner that is accessible to the public.

### Equality objectives

The Commission issued guidance ‘Equality objectives and the equality duty’ to help public authorities to develop effective equality objectives. This can be found at:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>

### Performance on objectives

The Commission assessed how government departments have performed with regard to publication of equality objectives. Overall, the websites of 49 government departments were assessed. This consisted of 25 non-ministerial departments, 16 large ministerial departments and a further 8 small ministerial offices.

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<sup>1</sup> In December 2012 the Commission published a report ‘Publishing equality information: Commitment, engagement and transparency’, about how public authorities in England had performed with regard to their specific duty to publish equality information. The report can be found at: [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/PSD/publishing\\_equality\\_information\\_final.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/PSD/publishing_equality_information_final.pdf)

## Key findings

Out of all 49 government departments, 32 (65.3%) were found to have published one or more equality objectives covering the period since the introduction of the PSED in April 2011\*.

This table measures how these 32 government departments performed against eight indicators.

Indicator	% of government departments
One or more objectives were linked to the aims of the general duty	21.9
Equality objectives made explicit reference to one or more PCs	65.6
A rationale was provided for the choice of objectives	75.0
One or more objectives were clear about the quantity of improvement sought	65.6
One or more objectives were clear about the timeframe for improvement	75.0
One or more objectives were clear about who was responsible for delivery	43.8
One or more objectives were clear about how progress would be reported	34.4
Objectives appear to be available in alternative formats	40.6

\* In some cases equality objectives that were undated were also included in the assessment where these appeared to cover the relevant timeframe. Please refer to the main report for a fuller description of the approach used.

The Commission has also published the overarching findings of its assessment, covering a range of sectors. This can be found on the Commission's website: [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com).