

Assessment of the publication of equality objectives by English public authorities

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Introduction

This report sets out the findings of an assessment of how public authorities in England are publishing equality objectives. Data for the assessment was collected between September and December 2012.

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaced the race, disability and gender equality duties with the public sector equality duty ('the equality duty' or 'the duty') on 5 April 2011. The equality duty covers nine protected characteristics which are set out in the Act.¹ The equality duty applies to over 40,000 public authorities across Great Britain and relates to everything they do, including their decision-making, policy development, budget setting, procurement, service delivery and employment functions.

The general duty² requires public authorities in all their functions 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.

These aims are supported by specific duties³ intended to improve performance on the general duty. These are set out in separate regulations which are different for England, Scotland and Wales. In summary, listed public authorities in England are required to:

- at least annually, publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty and
- at least every four years, prepare and publish one or more objectives that it thinks it needs to achieve to further any of the aims of the general equality duty.

1 The protected characteristics are race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity and marriage or civil partnership discrimination (the last characteristic applying only to discrimination in the workplace). Gender reassignment was covered to a limited extent by the Gender Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 recognises it as a 'relevant protected characteristic' for the purposes of the general equality duty in s.149.

2 The general duty is set out in s.149 of the Act.

3 Schedule 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (specific duties) Regulations 2011 lists the public authorities in England which are subject to the specific duties. For the Specific Duty regulations in England, please go to: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/2260/contents/made>

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 the first specific duty (publication of equality information). The report demonstrated that one in two public authorities reviewed were publishing equality information on their workforce **and** service users by April 2012. Many more (78%) were publishing information on **either** their staff or their service users.

Aspects of good practice were evident within all sectors. The report can be found at: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/PSD/publishing_equality_information_final.pdf

Content of the report

This report gives an overview of how listed authorities are performing in terms of the second specific duty (publication of equality objectives). A range of factsheets are available alongside the report. These set out how different sectors performed with regard to publishing objectives.

The Commission has 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/>

Assessment

In total, 2,010 assessments were conducted across a range of sectors. The types of authority covered included each of the following sectoral groupings:

Police forces (all – 39);

Probation trusts (all – 34);

Universities (all – 130);

Colleges (random sample: 189 out of 341- 55%);

Primary schools (random sample: 390 out of 20,569 - 1.9%);

Secondary schools (random sample: 383 out of 6,592 - 5.8%);

Local authorities (all – 354);

Healthcare providers (all – 256);

Healthcare commissioners (all – 147);

National organisations (all – 39);

Government departments (all – 49).

For a full list of the organisations assessed, see **Appendix 2**.

Terminology

The following terms have been used in the report:

- ‘Older [protected] characteristics’ to refer to the characteristics covered by the former equality duties (race, gender and disability).
- ‘Newer [protected] characteristics’ to refer to the additional characteristics also covered by the public sector equality duty (age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment in full⁴ and pregnancy and maternity).
- ‘Sectors’ to describe the broad groups of authorities used in reporting the results. There may be a range of different types of organisation within a sector (e.g. ‘national organisations’ refer to a wide range of organisations working at a national level across England).
- ‘Publishing authorities’ to describe the public authorities who have published equality objectives.

⁴ Gender reassignment was covered to a limited extent by the Gender Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 recognises it as a ‘relevant protected characteristic’ for the purposes of the general equality duty in s.149.

Main findings

This report documents the number and proportion of public authorities publishing objectives, and where objectives were published:

- whether the objectives were explicitly linked to the general duty aims;
- the protected characteristics they covered;
- the functions they covered and the types of objectives published;
- whether there was a rationale given for the chosen objectives;
- whether the objectives were specific and measurable;
- whether the objectives were available in alternative formats.

Publication of objectives

For the majority of sectors, all public authorities were assessed but, due to their large numbers, samples were selected from colleges as well as from primary and secondary schools. Although undated objectives were included if they appeared relevant, objectives published prior to the introduction of the equality duty in April 2011 were not taken into account. Except where stated otherwise, the rest of this chapter reports on the quality of the objectives published and all percentages relate to public authorities which published objectives. These will be referred to as ‘publishing authorities’.

Table 1: Equality objectives by date

Sector	Number of authorities assessed (un-weighted base)	% with equality objectives dated 2011/12	% with equality objectives not dated	% with objectives pre-dating the 2011 equality duty*	% assessed where no objectives found
Police	39	79.5	15.4	2.6	2.6
Probation trusts	34	79.4	2.9	17.6	0.0
National organisations	39	89.7	2.6	5.1	2.6
Government departments	49	61.2	4.1	4.1	30.6
Colleges	189	56.1	5.3	6.3	32.3
Primary schools	390	19.5	1.8	5.4	73.3
Secondary schools	383	21.4	1.8	7.0	69.7
Universities	130	76.9	5.4	6.2	11.5
Healthcare providers	256	93.4	2.3	2.0	2.3
Healthcare commissioners	147	91.2	4.1	4.8	0.0
Local government	354	79.4	5.6	11.6	3.4
All public authorities	2,010	22.7	1.9	5.8	69.5
All public authorities excluding schools	1,237	76.9	4.8	6.7	11.5

* out of scope as pre-dating April 2011 equality duty implementation date. Percentages may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding. Figures for all public authorities are weighted to adjust for sampling of schools and colleges.

An estimated 24.7 per cent of public authorities had published equality objectives. Excluding schools from the results, the percentage of authorities publishing equality objectives (dated 2011/ 2012 or undated) becomes considerably higher, at 81.7 per cent⁵.

More than 90 per cent of NHS service providers, NHS service commissioners, police forces and national organisations had published equality objectives. Over 80 per cent of local government, probation trusts and universities published objectives. This was followed by Government departments and colleges, where more than 60 per cent published objectives. Just one in five primary schools (21.3 per cent) and secondary schools (23.2 per cent) published objectives. However, behind these top line figures there are variations in performance, with some sectors having high publication rates, but performing poorly on other indicators, such as being specific and measurable.

Since December 2012 when the assessment period finished, the Commission has noted that many more public authorities have published objectives. Overall, by May 2013, 91.7 per cent of authorities (excluding schools) assessed had published up to date (or undated) objectives. 29.2 per cent of the sampled primary schools had published up to date (or undated) objectives, and 32.1 per cent of the sampled secondary schools had published up to date (or undated) objectives. This demonstrates that progress is continuing to be made by public authorities.

⁵ This percentage estimates the overall proportion that had published objectives, including those that were not included in the assessment sample. To calculate this estimate, the results for primary and secondary schools, colleges and other public authorities have been weighted to adjust for the different proportions assessed in each group.

The general duty

The specific duties are intended to support progress on the general duty, so it is helpful for public authorities to explain how their objectives link to the aims of the duty. Overall, a third of publishing authorities (36.6 per cent) made a reference to the general duty. However, no more than half of any sector did and 44.4 per cent of national organisations, 41.6 per cent of secondary schools and 41.4 per cent of NHS service commissioners did so. This was in stark contrast to police forces, where just three forces (8.1 per cent) did so.

A quarter of publishing authorities (27.0 per cent) made reference to all three aims of the duty; 30.5 per cent referred to the first aim of the duty (eliminating discrimination), 31.9 per cent referred to the second aim (advancing equality) and 32.5 per cent referred to the third aim (fostering good relations). This reflected a balanced spread across the different aims.

Table 2: Reference to the general duty aims
 Percentage of authorities who published objectives.

Sector	% making a clear reference to the general duty	% making reference to each aim				
		Elimination of discrimination	Advancing equality	Fostering good relations	All three aims of the general duty	Un-weighted base
Police	8.1	8.1	5.4	8.1	5.4	37
Probation trusts	25.0	25.0	14.3	14.3	14.3	28
National organisations	44.4	30.6	36.1	30.6	25.0	36
Government departments	21.9	15.6	12.5	0.0	0.0	32
Colleges	23.3	19.0	17.2	17.2	12.9	116
Primary schools	36.1	31.3	32.5	32.5	27.7	83
Secondary schools	41.6	31.5	34.8	37.1	29.2	89
Universities	37.4	32.7	34.6	33.6	29.9	107
Healthcare providers	30.6	27.3	26.5	25.3	21.6	245
Healthcare commissioners	41.4	32.1	35.0	37.9	27.9	140
Local government	34.6	27.2	27.2	31.2	24.9	301
All public authorities	36.6	30.5	31.9	32.5	27.0	1,214

Protected characteristics

Data was collected on whether or not the published objectives covered one or more protected characteristics. Where characteristics were identified, these were also noted. Table 3 sets out the proportion of publishing authorities with objectives that referred to particular protected characteristics (PCs). It shows that four-fifths (82.7 per cent) of publishing authorities referred to one or more protected characteristics. Tables 4 and 5 set out which protected characteristics were covered by the objectives.

A sixth (16.3 per cent) of publishing authorities had published objectives that explicitly referred to **only one** protected characteristic. For example, an objective to encourage women to apply for management positions where they are underrepresented.

A sixth of publishing authorities (15.8 per cent) had one or more objectives that related to **all** of the protected characteristics. For example, an objective to improve satisfaction rates for social care service users across all of the nine characteristics. As these objectives are not specific to any particular characteristic, they are reported on separately (see table 4) rather than being added to the total findings for each of the different characteristics (see table 5).

Table 3: References in objectives to protected characteristics (PCs)

Percentage of authorities who published objectives.

Sector	Authorities with one or more objectives that refer to one or more PC	Un-weighted base
Police	70.3	37
Probation trusts	82.1	28
National organisations	58.3	36
Government departments	65.6	32
Colleges	77.6	116
Primary schools	85.5	83
Secondary schools	80.9	89
Universities	89.7	107
Healthcare providers	75.9	245
Healthcare commissioners	74.3	140
Local government	67.8	301
All public authorities	82.7	1,214

Table 4: References in objectives to protected characteristics (PCs) by type of characteristic

Percentage of authorities who published objectives.

Sector	Only one PC referred to in objectives	Objective(s) that only relate to race, disability or gender	One or more objective(s) that refer to all PCs	Un-weighted base
Police	13.5	18.9	2.7	37
Probation trusts	10.7	14.3	7.1	28
National organisations	2.8	8.3	30.6	36
Government departments	6.3	6.3	31.3	32
Colleges	9.5	17.2	21.6	116
Primary schools	19.3	21.7	16.9	83
Secondary schools	13.5	36.0	9.0	89
Universities	4.7	16.8	15.0	107
Healthcare providers	9.8	9.4	29.0	245
Healthcare commissioners	7.1	12.1	30.7	140
Local government	8.6	4.0	12.6	301
All public authorities	16.3	23.0	15.8	1,214

Table 5: References in objectives to particular protected characteristics

Percentage of authorities who published objectives (not including objectives which cover ‘all protected characteristics’).

Sector	Age	Disability	Sex	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and civil partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sexual orientation	Un-weighted base
Police	32.4	54.1	43.2	21.6	0.0	5.4	51.4	35.1	35.1	37
Probation trusts	42.9	60.7	67.9	14.3	3.6	3.6	57.1	17.9	32.1	28
National organisations	16.7	50.0	44.4	8.3	2.8	5.6	44.4	19.4	25.0	36
Government departments	37.5	59.4	37.5	12.5	0.0	9.4	34.4	12.5	25.0	32
Colleges	25.9	47.4	46.6	18.1	5.2	9.5	49.1	27.6	30.2	116
Primary schools	15.7	44.6	54.2	25.3	2.4	2.4	55.4	31.3	15.7	83
Secondary schools	5.6	58.4	53.9	6.7	0.0	3.4	46.1	19.1	22.5	89
Universities	34.6	63.6	61.7	34.6	12.1	23.4	72.9	53.3	55.1	107
Healthcare providers	32.7	56.3	22.4	19.2	5.3	10.6	44.5	25.7	29.8	245
Healthcare commissioners	30.7	55.0	25.7	15.7	5.0	11.4	43.6	17.9	24.3	140
Local government	54.5	53.2	24.9	16.6	1.7	4.7	40.9	24.3	28.9	301
All public authorities	16.9	49.2	51.0	20.2	2.2	3.8	52.1	27.9	19.7	1,214

A key finding was that many publishing authorities had objectives that included the newer characteristics. Of the newer characteristics, religion or belief was the most common, with 27.9 per cent of publishing authorities having at least one objective on this characteristic. The next most common characteristics were gender reassignment (20.2 per cent), sexual orientation (19.7 per cent) and age (16.9 per cent). Very few had objectives covering pregnancy and maternity (3.8 per cent) or marriage and civil partnership (2.2 per cent).

Functions covered

In order to support the aims of the general duty, equality objectives should ideally address the key equality challenges facing a public authority. These will vary between sectors and authorities. Although many public authorities have traditionally focussed their equality work on employment matters, in recent years more has been done by public authorities to improve equality in service design and delivery. In order to establish whether public authorities are addressing both internal and external equality matters, data was collected about the functions that were covered by equality objectives.

The assessment found that 44.8 per cent of publishing authorities had objectives that aim to tackle employment **as well as** service delivery issues. A further 44.0 per cent had service delivery (but not employment) objectives and 3.5 per cent had employment (but not service) objectives. The other 7.7 per cent of publishing authorities had objectives that only covered 'other' equality issues. Examples of these include: assessing impact on equality, revising equality strategies and improving data gathering.

Table 6: Functions covered by objectives
 Percentage of authorities who published objectives.

Sector	% with both employment and service delivery objectives	% with service delivery objectives (but not on employment)	% with employment objectives (but not on services)	% with objectives that only cover areas other than employment or service delivery	Un-weighted base
Police	73.0	18.9	8.1	0.0	37
Probation trusts	85.7	7.1	0.0	7.1	28
National organisations	69.4	2.8	16.7	11.1	36
Government departments	87.5	3.1	9.4	0.0	32
Colleges	79.3	14.7	3.4	2.6	116
Primary schools	32.5	53.0	3.6	10.8	83
Secondary schools	55.1	42.7	1.1	1.1	89
Universities	81.3	3.7	14.0	0.9	107
Healthcare providers	88.6	5.7	3.3	2.4	245
Healthcare commissioners	81.4	6.4	7.1	5.0	140
Local government	66.4	19.3	6.6	7.6	301
All public authorities	44.8	44.0	3.5	7.7	1,214

Employment objectives

Table 7: Types of employment objectives

Percentage of authorities who published employment objectives.

Sector	Applications and appointments	Pay gap	Promotions or representation in senior roles	Discrimination, harassment, bullying or grievances	Sickness absence or staff leaving	Job satisfaction	Training	Other	Un-weighted base
Police	53.3	6.7	16.7	16.7	0.0	20.0	26.7	26.7	30
Probation trusts	16.7	0.0	20.8	20.8	0.0	16.7	70.8	62.5	24
National organisations	41.9	9.7	29.0	19.4	12.9	29.0	64.5	74.2	31
Government departments	41.9	19.4	41.9	32.3	0.0	16.1	32.3	54.8	31
Colleges	41.7	10.4	7.3	12.5	2.1	5.2	60.4	53.1	96
Primary schools	26.7	3.3	3.3	26.7	3.3	3.3	66.7	33.3	30
Secondary schools	26.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	2.0	54.0	44.0	50
Universities	36.3	33.3	35.3	23.5	2.0	18.6	51.0	46.1	102
Healthcare providers	23.6	15.1	21.3	30.2	4.4	23.1	64.0	57.8	225
Healthcare commissioners	17.7	5.6	13.7	21.8	0.8	5.6	66.9	51.6	124
Local government	38.2	20.9	16.4	10.5	2.7	3.2	50.5	54.5	220
All public authorities	28.2	6.5	7.9	19.0	2.3	5.5	60.8	41.8	963

Service delivery objectives

Table 8: Types of objectives relating to service delivery
Percentage of authorities who published service delivery objectives.

Sector	Service delivery outcomes	Satisfaction with services	Complaints	Service take-up	Other	Un-weighted base
Police	70.6	52.9	11.8	35.3	8.8	34
Probation trusts	73.1	0.0	0.0	15.4	46.2	26
National organisations	30.8	26.9	11.5	26.9	76.9	26
Government departments	65.5	17.2	6.9	31.0	65.5	29
Colleges	68.8	13.8	5.5	40.4	53.2	109
Primary schools	84.5	23.9	2.8	28.2	32.4	71
Secondary schools	80.5	13.8	1.1	13.8	37.9	87
Universities	58.2	27.5	11.0	47.3	45.1	91
Healthcare providers	50.6	41.6	17.3	31.6	62.3	231
Healthcare commissioners	43.1	31.7	10.6	41.5	75.6	123
Local government	63.2	21.7	5.0	43.4	50.8	258
All public authorities	79.2	22.0	3.5	26.4	37.5	1,085

Rationale for objectives

The assessment looked at whether or not publishing authorities provided a rationale for choosing their objectives. Overall, 48.3 per cent of publishing authorities included a rationale. In terms of the reasons why public authorities had chosen their objectives, around a quarter of authorities referred to quantitative data (22.2 per cent) or qualitative data (26.2 per cent). This could include, for example, the findings of engagement with stakeholders (e.g. people with protected characteristics). One in six chose their objectives by saying that they had taken into account their published equality information (N.B this could also be counted as qualitative or quantitative data).

Of those organisations giving other reasons, it was apparent that some sectors were influenced by national equality guidance and frameworks. This included sector specific initiatives, as well as national frameworks such as the Stonewall Equality Index⁶. Many health authorities cited the NHS Equality Delivery System⁷.

⁶ https://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_work/stonewall_top_100_employers/default.asp

⁷ <http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/equality-delivery-system/>

Table 9: Provision of rationale and reasons for choosing objectives

Percentage of authorities who published objectives.

Sector	% of authorities that provided a rationale for their objectives	Information used for choosing objectives				
		Quantitative data	Qualitative data	Published equality information	Other reason	Un-weighted base
Police	10.8	8.1	8.1	2.7	2.7	37
Probation trusts	50.0	21.4	17.9	14.3	25.0	28
National organisations	63.9	22.2	30.6	22.2	36.1	36
Government departments	75.0	25.0	34.4	31.3	46.9	32
Colleges	26.7	8.6	11.2	6.0	12.1	116
Primary schools	48.2	25.3	27.7	15.7	9.6	83
Secondary schools	41.6	16.9	18.0	13.5	18.0	89
Universities	38.3	14.0	29.0	15.9	15.9	107
Healthcare providers	79.6	16.3	47.3	35.5	43.7	245
Healthcare commissioners	92.1	26.4	56.4	41.4	82.9	140
Local government	55.5	20.3	25.6	8.6	27.9	301
All public authorities	48.3	22.2	26.2	15.8	15.4	1,214

Specific and measurable

Setting specific and measurable objectives can help authorities and stakeholders to assess whether sufficient progress is being made to achieve the desired outcome. The assessment therefore looked at whether public authorities clarified: the quantity of improvement required for delivery; the timeframe required for improvements to be made; who was responsible for delivery and how performance would be reported.

Half of publishing authorities had at least one objective that quantified the level of improvement needed for delivery and half (48.8 per cent) set out the timeframe for the improvements to be made in. Overall, 58.5 per cent of publishing authorities had set out who was responsible for delivery and 39.8 per cent of publishing authorities set out reporting arrangements.

Table 10: Specification of improvements required in objectives
 Percentage of authorities who published objectives

Sector	% of authorities with objectives which set out the quantity of improvement required for delivery	% of authorities with objectives which set out the timeframe required for the improvement to be made in	Un-weighted base
Police	24.3	64.9	37
Probation trusts	35.7	42.9	28
National organisations	41.7	47.2	36
Government departments	65.6	75.0	32
Colleges	44.0	65.5	116
Primary schools	56.6	48.2	83
Secondary schools	38.2	41.6	89
Universities	50.5	72.0	107
Healthcare providers	37.1	59.6	245
Healthcare commissioners	36.4	59.3	140
Local government	31.9	57.1	301
All public authorities	49.7	48.8	1,214

Table 11: Specification of responsibility and reporting intentions

Percentage of authorities who published objectives.

Sector	% of authorities where the objectives included a named person responsible for delivery	% of authorities where it was clear in the objectives how performance would be reported	Un-weighted base
Police	24.3	2.7	37
Probation trusts	28.6	28.6	28
National organisations	36.1	38.9	36
Government departments	43.8	34.4	32
Colleges	44.8	30.2	116
Primary schools	62.7	43.4	83
Secondary schools	56.2	37.1	89
Universities	56.1	29.9	107
Healthcare providers	54.7	27.8	245
Healthcare commissioners	44.3	30.0	140
Local government	40.2	31.9	301
All public authorities	58.5	39.8	1,214

Accessibility

The assessment looked at whether or not the objectives were also available in alternative formats, such as in large text or in an easy read format.

Table 12: Availability of objectives in alternative formats in percentages

Sector	Alternative formats available to download (A)	Statement and contact details for alternative formats (B)	Statement only that alternative formats available (C)	Any of these (A+B+C)	Un-weighted base
Police	0.0	18.9	0.0	18.9	37
Probation trusts	0.0	10.7	3.6	14.3	28
National organisations	11.1	5.6	11.1	27.8	36
Government departments	6.3	31.3	3.1	40.6	32
Colleges	2.6	9.5	5.2	17.2	116
Primary schools	7.2	10.8	1.2	19.3	83
Secondary schools	11.2	4.5	3.4	19.1	89
Universities	13.1	12.1	0.0	25.2	107
Healthcare providers	20.0	17.1	3.7	40.8	245
Healthcare commissioners	15.0	18.6	2.1	35.7	140
Local government	14.3	27.2	4.3	45.8	301
All public authorities	8.9	10.6	2.1	21.6	1214

Providing equality objectives in alternative formats can improve access as well as transparency and accountability to members of the public. Overall, a fifth of publishing authorities (21.6 per cent) indicated in one of these ways that their objectives were available in alternative formats. This was made up of: 8.9 per cent of publishing authorities who had alternative formats available for download from their website, 10.6 per cent who gave contact details for requesting alternative formats and 2.1 per cent who said alternative formats were available, but gave no information about how to obtain them⁸.

⁸ When undertaking the assessment, the Commission did not make individual requests to public authorities to provide objectives in alternative formats, so it is not possible to quantify exactly how many authorities were in fact able to produce their objectives in this way.

Summary of findings

- Excluding schools, the percentage of authorities who had published equality objectives between 2011 and 2012 (or whose objectives were undated) was 81.7 per cent. If schools are included, this percentage drops to a quarter of public authorities (24.7 per cent).
- Public authorities have continued to make progress in terms of publishing equality objectives since the end of the assessment period (December 2012).
- A third of authorities (36.6 per cent) made a clear reference to the aims of the general duty. However, in practice many authorities published objectives that did relate to the general duty, even where not explicitly acknowledged.
- Many publishing authorities published objectives that included the newer protected characteristics set out under the duty, rather than only focussing on race, disability or gender.
- Publishing authorities were most likely to publish objectives on employment as well as on service delivery (44.8 per cent).
- Around half of publishing authorities (48.3 per cent) had included a rationale to explain why they had chosen their objectives.
- In terms of being specific and measurable, 49.7 per cent of public authorities set out the quantity of improvement required, and 48.8 per cent had set out the timeframe required for the improvement to be made in.
- One in five publishing authorities (21.6 per cent) appeared to have their equality objectives available in alternative formats.

Appendix 1: Methodology

Introduction

In total 2,010 assessments were conducted between September and December 2012.

For a breakdown of the sectors, and the number of organisations assessed, see **Appendix 2**.

We looked at the entirety of 8 sectors. However, due to the large numbers of colleges, primary schools and secondary schools, organisations from these sectors were sampled⁹. This was done in a systematic way. For example, with colleges we chose alternate ones from a list, and ensured a spread across the nine English regions.

Assessors spent up to 30 minutes per assessment (approach described below). 15 minutes was considered a reasonable amount of time for a member of the public to search for the objectives. If the objectives could not be found on a website within that timeframe, the objectives were not deemed to be accessible and the assessors would not look any further.

Where no objectives were found, the process was repeated by another assessor using the same methodology, in order to verify the findings of the first assessment.

The purpose of publishing equality objectives is to support performance on the general duty. As the new general duty came into force in April 2011, objectives published before then were not assessed. Equality objectives that were undated but which appeared to cover the present and/or future period were included in the assessment.

A three step approach was taken:

1. If the website had a search function then assessors entered “equality objectives”. They looked at the top ten results and if they found equality objectives clearly dated or in a web page or document from 2011 or 2012, or that were undated but appeared relevant, then they used these objectives for the assessment.

⁹ For colleges, primary schools and secondary schools, organisations were sampled using a systematic approach. This was based on the selection of every nth organisation from a list. For example, alternative colleges were selected (n=2) and the list was sorted by region so as to obtain an even spread across the nine English regions.

2. If the previous method didn't return results, a search was done for an equality/diversity section on the website. If there was a search function then "equality" followed by "diversity" were entered. If an equality or diversity page was found in the top ten results, then assessors looked here to see if there were any equality objectives from 2011 or 2012 or that were undated but appeared relevant.

3. If the first two methods didn't return results then (through the search function or the site map) assessors looked for an "Equality Scheme/Plan", "Strategic/Business Plan" or "Annual Report" in that order. They then searched through these documents to find any equality objectives.

Information was gathered about the availability of equality objectives in alternative formats. This included assessing websites to establish whether they had an accessibility function (i.e. where the font size or colour of the text can be changed on the website) and whether they had an accessibility page which explained whether documents were available in other formats, either directly available on the website or by request.

There are strengths and weaknesses to any assessment approach. One strength of the approach taken is that it enabled a large number of assessments to be undertaken over a relatively short period of time. We could also assess how easy equality objectives were to find and where they were located. Where objectives were not found this is likely to be because they were not present, or they were relatively inaccessible. In some cases where no objectives were found, this may have been because they were located elsewhere on a website, published somewhere other than the website in hard copy, or not available due to technical issues.

The following assessment template guided the internal team of assessors searching for information on equality objectives as they reviewed each website. This helped to ensure a consistent and fair approach to conducting the assessments. They entered relevant information into the template which generated a database with information for all 2,010 assessments.

Assessment questions

Getting started

Enter the name of the organisation you are assessing and select the appropriate sector and sub-sector from the drop down menus. Search for equality objectives for no longer than 15 minutes. If you do not find any equality objectives, using the methodology below, within this 15 minute period then you should select option d below.

Method 1: If the website has a search function then enter “equality objectives”. Look at the first top 10 results and if you find equality objectives clearly dated or in a web page or document from 2011 or 2012 then use these objectives for the assessment.

Method 2: If the previous method doesn’t return results then search for an equality/diversity section on the website. If there is a search function then enter “equality” and then “diversity” if this fails. If you find an equality or diversity page in the top 10 results then look here to see if there are any equality objectives from 2011 or 2012.

Method 3: If the first two methods don’t return results then through either the search function or site map you should look for an “Equality Scheme/Plan”, “Strategic/Business Plan” or “Annual Report” in that order. You should then search through these documents to find any equality objectives.

Question 10

Record at Question 10 which of the three methods was successful in finding the equality objectives or whether no objectives were found. Select one of the following options:

- Select Q10a if it was by method 1
- Select Q10b if it was by method 2
- Select Q10c if it was by method 3

Select Q10d if no objectives were found using all of the 3 methods.

If Q10d is selected then that will be the end of the exercise. The form will take you to Q32 and you should enter the end time and then finish the exercise.

Question 11

Record the date of equality objectives or the documents or web pages in which you found the equality objectives in. Select one of the following options:

- Select Q11a from 2011 or 2012 onwards
- Select Q11b older than 2011
- Select Q11c Undated

If Q11b is selected then that will be the end of the exercise and the form will take you to Q32 and you should enter the end time and then finish the exercise.

Question 12

Enter the number of equality objectives the organisation has published.

Question 13

Copy and paste the web address of the page or document that contains the equality objectives.

Question 14

Indicate whether the information that you find following the methodology in questions 10 and 11 (whether that is in a web page or document) contains any details on the availability of equality objectives in alternative formats. For the purposes of this exercise “alternative formats” refers to the provision of information in 2 or more different formats of any kind. Example: a pdf document and a word document or a document in English and a document in another language or a document in standard text and an easy read document. Select one of the following options:

- Select Q14a if there is a statement that can be found in the information that you find that equality objectives are available in alternative formats with contact info for requesting
- Select Q14b if there is a statement that can be found in the information that you find about the availability of equality objectives in alternative formats but unclear how to obtain
- Select Q14c if equality objectives in alternative formats can be downloaded direct from the information you find
- Select Q14d if there is no mention at all in the information that you find about the availability of equality objectives in alternative formats.

When answering questions 15 to 31 please remember the following:

- You are not required to base your answers to questions Q15 to Q31 on an assessment of each individual equality objective that has been published. (NOTE: The exception to this are for Q20j and 20k – see page 7 and for Q28 – see page 11 for details)
- You should base your answers to questions Q15 to Q31 on an overall assessment of the details of all equality objectives that you find.

Question 15

Indicate whether the organisation has given an explanation or justification of why they chose their particular equality objectives. This explanation may be provided in an introduction to the all equality objectives or an explanation may be given as part of the equality objectives. If you find an explanation for the equality objectives you should select Q15a (YES). It may be that the organisation has simply published a list of equality objectives without an explanation and if this is the case and you can find no explanation then you should select Q15b (NO).

Question 16

(You should only answer this question if you selected Q15a). Indicate what type of information the authority has included in their explanation of why the equality objectives were selected. Select as many of the following that apply:

- Select Q16a if the explanation includes quantitative data
- Select Q16b if the explanation includes any qualitative evidence from engagement, involvement or consultation
- Select Q16c if the explanation includes an explicitly statement that the organisation has used the equality information, they are required to publish under the specific duties, to inform the selection of their equality objectives.
- Select Q16d if the explanation includes any other reason or justification for the selection of the equality objectives.

Question 17

Indicate whether the explanation for selection of equality objectives makes an explicit link to the 3 aims of the general duty. Select Q17a (YES) if you find an explicit reference to these aims in the explanation. Select Q17b (NO) if you find an explicit reference to these aims in the explanation.

Question 18

(You should only answer this question if you selected Q17a.) Indicate which of the aims of the general duty were explicitly referenced. Select as many of the following that apply:

- Select Q18a if there is an explicit reference to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act.
- Select Q18b if there is an explicit reference to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Select Q18c if there is an explicit reference to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

Question 19

Record which of the protected characteristics are explicitly referenced in the equality objectives. Select Q19a (YES) if any of the equality objectives explicitly references one or more protected characteristics. Select Q19b (NO) if there is no explicit reference to one or more of the protected characteristics in the equality objectives.

Question 20

(You should only answer this question if you selected 19a). Record which of the protected characteristics were explicitly referenced. Select as many of the following that apply:

- Select Q20a if there is an explicit reference to age
- Select Q20b if there is an explicit reference to disability
- Select Q20c if there is an explicit reference to gender
- Select Q20d if there is an explicit reference to gender reassignment or trans
- Select Q20e if there is an explicit reference to Marriage and civil partnership
- Select Q20f if there is an explicit reference to pregnancy and maternity
- Select Q20g if there is an explicit reference to race/ethnicity
- Select Q20h if there is an explicit reference to religion or belief
- Select Q20i if there is an explicit reference to sexual orientation/LGB
- Select Q20j if there is an explicit reference to all 9 protected characteristics
- Select Q20k if any equality objectives address a combination of protected characteristics. If you select this option you should detail, in the accompanying in the text box, the combination of protected characteristics that are referred to.
- Select Q20j if any individual equality objective explicitly states it is for people with all protected characteristics.
- Select Q20k if any individual equality objective addresses issues for people with a combination of protected characteristics.

Question 21

Select Q21a (YES) if any of the equality objectives are explicit about the policy, function or practice that they relate to.

Select Q21b (NO) if none of the equality objectives are explicit about the policy, function or practice that they relate to. Examples of objectives that are not explicit about the policy, function or practice covered:

A school sets an equality objective to “Become a more inclusive school”;

A council sets an equality objective to “Make PSEDville a better place”;

A Government department sets an equality objective to “Become an excellent employer”

Question 22

(You should only answer this question if you selected YES for Q21). Select Q22a (YES) if any of the equality objectives cover employment-related policy function or practice. Select Q22b (NO) if none of the equality objectives cover employment-related policy function or practice.

Question 23

(You should only answer this question if you selected YES for Q22). Select which employment-related policy, function or practice list is included in the equality objectives. Select as many of the options that apply. If what you find is not included in this list then you should select Q23i and summarise what this is in the text box.

Question 24

(You should only answer this question if you selected YES for Q21). Select Q24a (YES) if any of the equality objectives cover service delivery-related policy function or practice. Select Q24b (NO) if none of the equality objectives cover service delivery-related policy function or practice.

Question 25

(You should only answer this question if you selected YES for Q24). Select which service delivery-related policy, function or practice list is included in the equality objectives. Select as many of the options that apply and summarise details of the policy, function or practice in the text box below.

Question 26

(You should only answer this question if you selected YES for Q21). Select Q26a (YES) if any of the equality objectives cover other types of policy function or practice. Select Q26b (NO) if none of the equality objectives cover other types of policy function or practice.

For the purposes of this exercise we have categorised this into two categories:

1) Equality or organisational processes: This category relates to objectives that are only focussed on improving organisational processes (such as procurement, improving data collection, engagement, equality analysis etc) without any explicit link to employment or service delivery.

You should select this “other” option if any of the objectives focuses only on the organisational process. If the objective states that this process is linked to employment or service delivery then you should not select this option and instead select YES for employment (Q22) or service delivery (Q24)

2) Other: This category relate to objectives that aim to deliver equality outcomes in the local area beyond the direct employment or service delivery of a public body in question. Examples of public value objective are those that relate to:

- civic participation,
- VCS funding,
- improving community cohesion/relations,
- reduce prejudice/stigma etc.

You should select this “other” option only if the objective does not specifically mention employment or service delivery. If the objective does state that the public body will do something about its employment or service delivery to achieve the outcome in question, then you should not select this option and instead select YES for employment (Q22) or service delivery (Q24).

Question 27

(You should only answer this question if you selected YES for Q26). Select which of the two categories of other policy, function or practice list is included in the equality objectives. Select as many of the options that apply and summarise details of the policy, function or practice in the text box below. For the purposes of this exercise an objective can only be considered specific and measurable if it meets all of the following 4 criteria:

- It contains specific reference to one or more protected characteristics
- It contains specific reference to a policy, function or practice
- It contains specific reference to the quantity of improvement required
- It contains explicit reference to the timeframe for achieving the quantity of improvement

Example of a specific objective: A NHS trust sets an equality objective to increase the number of lesbian patients accessing their cervical smear service by 60 per cent over the next four years.

Example of a non-specific objective: A college sets an equality objective to increase educational attainment of disabled students

Question 28

Indicate whether any of the equality objectives you find meet the 4 criteria for being specific and measurable. Select one of the following options: Select Q28a if all of the equality objectives you find meet the four criteria for being specific and measurable. Select Q28b if at least one of the equality objectives you find meet the four criteria for being specific and measurable. Select Q28c if none of the equality objectives you find meet the four criteria for being specific and measurable.

Question 29

Indicate which of the 4 criteria were not met by any of the equality objectives. Select as many of the following that apply:

- Select Q29a if none of the equality objectives contain specific reference to one or more protected characteristics
- Select Q29b if none of the equality objectives contain specific reference to a policy, function or practice
- Select Q29c if none of the equality objectives contain specific reference to the quantity of improvement required
- Select Q29d if none of the equality objectives contain It contains specific reference to the timeframe for achieving the quantity of improvement

Question 30

Indicate whether any of the equality objectives are aimed at delivering outcomes for organisations or outcomes for people. Select as many of the following that apply: Select Q29a if any of the equality objectives are aimed at delivering organisational process related outcomes.

Select Q29b if any of the equality objectives are aimed at delivering outcomes for staff, service users or other people.

Question 31

You should select Q30a (YES) if any of the equality objectives are explicit about which person or department is responsible for delivery. You should select Q30b (NO) if none of the equality objectives are explicit about which person or department is responsible for delivery

Question 32

You should select Q31a (YES) if any of the equality objectives are explicit about how updates of progress will be provided. You should select Q31b (NO) if none of the equality objectives are explicit about how updates of progress will be provided.

Question 33

Enter the date and time you completed your assessment.

Appendix 2: Authorities assessed

Sector	Sub-sector	All in sector	Number assessed	Category used in the report
Police	Police forces	39	39	Police forces
Criminal Justice	Probation Trusts	34	34	Probation Trusts
Educational bodies	Universities	130	130	Universities
	Colleges (1)	341	189	Colleges
	Primary schools (2)	20,569	390	Primary schools
	Secondary schools	6,592	383	Secondary schools
Local government	District Councils	202	202	Local authorities
	County Councils	27	27	
	London Borough	33	33	
	Unitary Authority	56	56	
	Metropolitan Councils	36	36	
Health, social care and social security	Acute Trusts	65	65	Health and Social Care – Service Providers
	Ambulance Trusts	8	8	
	Care Trust	23	23	
	Mental Health Trust	17	17	
	NHS Foundation Trust	143	143	
	Primary Care Trusts	147	147	NHS service commissioners
National organisations	Police (3)	6	6	National organisations
	Criminal justice (4)	6	6	
	Health, social care and social security (5)	2	2	

	Local government (6)	1	1	
	Other Educational bodies (7)	2	2	
	Regulators (8)	3	3	
	Court services and legal services (9)	4	4	
	Broadcasting (10)	2	2	
	Civil liberties (11)	2	2	
	Environment, housing and development (12)	4	4	
	Industry, business, finance (13)	7	7	
Ministers of the Crown and government departments	Large ministerial departments (14)	16	16	Government departments
	Small ministerial departments and offices (those with less than 150 staff) (15)	8	8	
	Non-ministerial departments (16)	25	25	
Total		28550	2010	

Endnotes

- (1) Due to time and resource constraints, all 341 colleges were not assessed. A sample of 189 colleges were selected to represent the nine English Regions. This was done by grouping colleges by region and selecting a random sample from the list.
- (2) Primary and secondary schools were also randomly sampled.
- (3) British Transport Police, British Transport Police Authority, Civil Nuclear Police Authority, The Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency, The Independent Police Complaints Commission, The Serious Organised Crime Agency.
- (4) Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation for England and Wales, The Parole Board for England and Wales, The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.

- (5) The Care Quality Commission, The Independent Regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts.
- (6) The Audit Commission.
- (7) Student Loans Company Ltd, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).
- (8) The Health and Safety Executive, The General Council of the Bar, The Law Society for England and Wales.
- (9) The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, The Judicial Appointments Commission, The Legal Services Board, The Legal Services Commission.
- (10) BBC, Channel 4.
- (11) Equality and Human Rights Commission, The Information Commissioner.
- (12) Natural England, The Environment Agency, The Homes and Communities Agency, The Olympic Development Authority.
- (13) The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, The Bank of England, in respect of its public functions, The Civil Aviation Authority, The Financial Services Authority, The National Audit Office, The Office for Budget Responsibility, The Office of Communications.
- (14) The Cabinet Office, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), Department for Education, Department for Energy and Climate Change, Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Department for Health, Department for International Development, Department for Transport, Department for Work and Pensions, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, HM Treasury, Home Office, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice.
- (15) Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Advocate General for Scotland, Northern Ireland Office, Office of the Leader of the House of Commons, Office of the Leader of the House of Lords, Prime Minister's Office, Scotland Office, Wales Office.

(16) Charity Commission, Commissioners for Reduction of the National Debt, Crown Estate, Crown Prosecution Service, Food Standards Agency, Forestry Commission, Government Actuary's Department, HM Customs and Revenue, HM Land Registry, National Archives, National Savings and Investments, Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), Office of Fair Trading, Office of Rail Regulation, Office of Gas and Electricity Markets, Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulation (Ofqual), Office of Water Services, Ordnance Survey, Public Works and Loans Board, Royal Mail, Serious Fraud Office, Treasury Solicitors, UK Statistics Authority, UK Supreme Court, UK Trade and Investment.

Contacts

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