

THE EQUALITIES REVIEW

22 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

Telephone: 020 7276 5436

Fax: 020 7276 1008

E-mail: equalitiesreview@
cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk

11 October 2005

Dear Colleague,

EQUALITIES REVIEW Call for Evidence

The Government is committed to building a society where every person has an equal chance to achieve their potential not limited by prejudice and discrimination. Building on over thirty years' experience of equality legislation, a comprehensive programme of reform is underway that will create a new framework to challenge discrimination and inequality.

As part of this programme of reform the Prime Minister asked Trevor Phillips to chair the Equalities Review Panel. He is joined on the Panel by Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas, Carol Lake, Nick Pearce and Sir Bob Kerslake. I am writing to ask you to submit initial evidence to help guide the Panel in this work. This will feed into the interim report for publication in early 2006 which will be the subject of a full public consultation.

Background to the Review

Significant progress has been made in addressing inequality and prejudice since the first Race Relations Act was introduced in 1965. Since then, Governments have legislated to protect people from discrimination on the basis of gender and disability, and more recently on the basis of sexual orientation and religion or belief, and soon age. But despite substantial progress during the last 40 years, there remains evidence of deep-seated patterns of disadvantage in our society.

For example, disabled people are at far greater risk of poverty than non-disabled people. Educational attainment for black Caribbean boys consistently falls below that of their female and white peers. The unemployment rate of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis is 2.5 times greater than that of the white population. The pay gap between men's and women's earnings remains. Someone made redundant after 50 is eight times less likely to return to work than a younger person. And incidences of hate crime threaten the security of many different minority groups.

Existing work to tackle inequality has focused on particular groups. We need to build on this to develop a better understanding of the long term and

underlying barriers to opportunity so that we can identify the tools that are effective in improving individual outcomes while balancing the needs of business and employers for a regulatory regime consistent with continued wealth creation.

That is why the Prime Minister asked the Panel to undertake a fundamental review of equality of opportunity. This review will identify the interaction between socio-economic inequalities and the position of disadvantaged groups, and propose changes – both to the legislative framework and more widely – that can transform people's life chances. The work will provide a firm foundation for the work of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights, as well as providing recommendations for the Government, the wider public sector, employers and trade unions, civic society and the voluntary sector.

Trevor Phillips wrote to a number of individuals and organisations on 22 July, asking for some initial input. Thank you to all those who have responded. I am writing now, on behalf of the Panel, to formally request your help in setting out a comprehensive picture, and in understanding the issues facing people and groups across England, Wales and Scotland. This will feed into our interim report in the winter.

Focus for the review

Given the breadth of the challenge facing the Panel it has decided to have a clear focus on the long term and on those areas that, despite Government efforts, progress remains too slow, or where things have got worse.

The Panel will therefore look back over the last 60 years and ahead to the next 40 years to set priorities. We are working with academics and researchers to try and understand from the data what the most intractable areas are, but we are also keen to hear what you think are the most intractable problems.

Call for evidence

This call for evidence is split into a number of different sections and sub-sections.

First it focuses on getting your views on where we are – the progress that has been made, looking at what the intractable problems are and the inter-relationships between poverty, class and discrimination.

Second it asks about what you or your organisation do to tackle inequality - what are the barriers, what interventions work, what are the gaps. Where possible we would like you to relate this to your specific work, or services that you have experienced.

Third it asks you to tell us where you think Great Britain should be in the future, and asks you to help us set the priorities for this work.

The Panel would like to hear from individuals and groups including:

- Organisations that work to reduce inequalities;
- Organisations that provide advice on equality and human rights;
- Organisations that provide services to people experiencing inequality, discrimination or disadvantage;
- Staff delivering these services at the frontline;
- People experiencing inequality, discrimination or disadvantage;
- Organisations that represent these people;
- Organisations, academics and think tanks who undertake research into equality and human rights.

What to include and by when

The Panel wants to hear your views about the priorities and focus for tackling inequalities. In addition, it would be helpful to hear about:

- Examples of good practice, including examples from other countries;
- Case studies that show how services helped people or highlight problems facing service users;
- Projects that you think we should know about, including contact details if you can;
- Research, please provide full references where possible.

We are sending this letter to organisations across England, Wales and Scotland that we think will want to contribute to the Review. However if there are other people that you think may want to respond please let them know. This letter is on our website www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk. You can contact the Equalities Review Team on 020 7276 3813.

Please send your responses to: equalitiesreview@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk or to The Equalities Review Team, 3.32, 22-26 Whitehall, London SW1A 2WH. The closing date is **26 November**. Please also let us know if you would like to come and talk to the Panel or the Team to give evidence in person.

Yours sincerely

Rosie Seymour
Equalities Review Team

Your response to the Equalities Review Team.

Name	
Address	
Email address	
Contact Number	
Name of Organisation (if applicable)	
Position (if applicable)	

Data Protection

Under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, it is our normal practice to let people who ask see all responses.

- If you would prefer us not to give out your answers please check this box.
- We also sometimes quote from the information we get in published reports. If you do not want us to quote your answers please check this box.

Questions

1. Where are we?

- (i) What progress do you think has been made over the past 60 years to reduce inequalities?
- (ii) What helped in making that progress?
- (iii) What do you think are the most persistent and stubborn inequalities?

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In 40 years?

- (ii) What should our top three priorities be for this review?

- (iii) What are the priorities for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights?

- (iv) What are the priorities for Government? Other sectors?

Please note response should reach the Equalities Review team by Friday 26 November. Send your responses to: equalitiesreview@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk or to The Equalities Review Team, 3.32, 22-26 Whitehall, London SW1A 2WH.

Please tick the box which best describes your organisation

- Voluntary sector/charity
- Public sector
- Private sector
- Other (please specify)

Which area does your organisation cover?

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or faith
- Sexual Orientation
- Transgender
- Other (please specify)