

Appendix B – EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act replaces the previous anti-discrimination legislation with a single Act that simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier to understand. It also strengthens the law to help tackle discrimination and inequality, and expands the Duties placed on public bodies.

The Equality Duty aims to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of all public bodies, and those carrying out public functions, so that they tackle discrimination and inequality. The Duty requires public bodies to engage with the diverse communities affected by their activities and decisions to ensure that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

The Duty consists of a **general Duty** and **specific Duties** – the specific Duties are designed to enable public bodies to meet the general Duty. The new Duty replaces the existing public sector equality Duties and covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (ethnic or national origin, colour, nationality)
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Duty also applies to 'marriage and civil partnership' but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The General Duty has 3 aims. Public bodies must consciously consider these three aims as part of the process of decision making, and the specific Duties require evidence that this has happened:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people from different groups
- **Foster good relations** between people from different groups

The specific Duties provide a framework to enable public bodies to meet the general Duty. The Duties require public bodies to set specific, measurable, equality outcomes, embedded into core practice and process, and to publish information on their progress to enable public scrutiny and accountability.

The Act is designed to reduce bureaucracy whilst helping public bodies deliver equality outcomes. It will require public bodies to publish more information than before, and to demonstrate how they are delivering improvement so that the public can hold them to account.

