



Department
for Education

The Department and the Equality Act 2010: equality objectives

Vision

Our vision is a highly-educated society in which opportunity is more equal for children and young people no matter what their background or family circumstances.

We will achieve this vision through 5 strategic aims, which are mutually reinforcing. The associated actions are intended to benefit all children. In enabling schools and others to work towards the aims we shall look at evidence of progress for people with particular characteristics protected under the Equality Act, as part of our responsibility to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.

Raising standards of educational achievement

Equality objective: ensure that all children gain the knowledge they need to prepare them for adult life, through a reformed National Curriculum and more robust academic and vocational qualifications up to the age of 19.

We will be looking in particular for evidence of attainment of children and young people with special educational needs, and those from minority ethnic communities that are currently under-achieving.

We will support young women and young men to make informed choices, not limited by stereotypical thinking, by introducing a new duty on schools and colleges to secure access to independent careers guidance for all 12 to 18 year olds. This should include information on the full range of education and training options, including apprenticeships.

We will set out a clear vision for careers guidance that is based on inspiring every young person with a sense of what they can achieve through more real-life contacts with the world of work.

Closing the achievement gap between rich and poor

Equality objective: to narrow the achievement gap for children and young people, including children in care, by ensuring increased opportunities and improved outcomes.

We will monitor the attainment of disadvantaged children.

We will encourage academy grammar schools to use pupil premium priority in their admissions arrangements.

We will extend the definition of previously looked-after children for admissions priority, to give wider eligibility.

We will consult on revising the Admissions Code to extend to all schools the ability to give pupil premium admissions priority; and to enable primary schools to give pupil premium priority from certain categories of nurseries.

Reforming the schools system

Equality objective: learning from the international evidence, provide parents with more choice between high quality schools; give all schools more freedom, raise teaching standards and reform funding arrangements to be fairer, more transparent and to deliver value for money.

We will be looking at the evidence around parental choice, to see if any patterns emerge.

We will provide guidance and work with schools/local authorities to help remove disadvantage for summer-born children, the youngest in the year group, by ensuring they are admitted to the most appropriate year group when they start school at age 5.

We will reform how local authorities distribute funding to schools. The fair funding system contains deprivation factors to focus funding on the most deprived people.

Supporting all children and young people, particularly the disadvantaged

Equality objective: help children to fulfil their full potential, by supporting families and focusing support on improving the lives of the most vulnerable children, including those who experience bullying or exclusion.

We are supportive of schools preventing and tackling the bullying of children and young people. We expect headteachers to take a strong stand against all bullying – particularly prejudice-based racist, sexist and homophobic bullying.

We will continue to reinforce to schools the importance of their equality duties within the exclusion process and encourage the use of early intervention to reduce the need for exclusion. We will also monitor the use of exclusion for different groups, including those groups with a disproportionately high rate of exclusion.

Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department

Equality objective: improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department.

We will secure and retain an effective, efficient and representative workforce that enables us to deliver against the Ministerial priorities; raising standards and closing the attainment gap.

We will be looking for evidence of increased representation of under-represented groups in the Senior Civil Service and the grades immediately below. This fact sheet provides information for local authorities on adoption reform.

The Children and Families Bill takes forward the coalition government's commitments to improve services for vulnerable children and support strong families.

The bill will reform the systems for adoption, looked after children, family justice and special educational needs. It will encourage growth in the childcare sector, introduce a new system of shared parental leave and ensure children in England have a strong advocate for their rights.