



EDF's view of the Equality Bill

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What I'll cover

- EDF
- Overall view
- Simplified and streamlined provisions
- Stronger and broader provisions
- Concerns
- Timetable

The Equality and Diversity Forum is a network of national organisations committed to progress on age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and broader equality and human rights issues.

What EDF does

Aims:

- Promote dialogue and trust
- Enable joint action

Activities:

- Monthly meetings
- Fortnightly free e-newsletter
- Website resource bank – www.edf.org.uk
- Research and publications
- Policy influencing
- Events
- Secretariat for all party parliamentary equalities group

Overall view

- Strongly welcome Bill
- Could be improved further
- But key to get it through
- Up to next Government to bring into force
– we want whole package implemented
- Law is important but only one lever:
policies, practice and leadership vital too

Simplified and streamlined

- Harmonised definitions
 - Generally very helpful
 - Some unhelpful wording
- Greater clarity about who is covered
 - Maternity, marital status, gender reassignment
- Positive action
 - Significant improvement
 - ‘Tie break’
 - Political parties

Stronger or broader

- Public sector equality duty
 - All grounds (including children)
 - More of outcome focus
- Procurement
 - Clearly covered by general public sector duty
 - Specific duties proposed too
- Age discrimination ban for service providers
 - Biggest 'levelling up' provision
 - Exemptions (not in Bill) key to impact

Stronger or broader

- Discrimination by association/perception
 - All characteristics in all fields
 - In effect makes carers a protected group
 - Key for stigmatised groups
- Socio-economic duty
 - Modest change
 - Powerful symbol?

Stronger or broader

- Dual discrimination
 - New
 - But only direct discrimination
 - Only two grounds (e.g. disability and race)
- Private clubs
- Tribunal recommendations
 - Welcome attempt to address systemic issues

Some concerns

- No purpose clause or equality guarantee
- Harassment permitted in schools on some grounds
- Accidental regression re disability
 - Public sector duty
 - Disability-related discrimination
- No representative actions
- Insufficient onus on private sector
- Age discrimination against children and young people remains lawful

Expected Timetable

- Final Commons stages Nov/Dec
- Lords stages start before Christmas
- Parliamentary stages must be complete by April 24 2010
- Staged implementation from October 2010 to 2012
- Implementation depends on next Govt
- No guarantees, keep pressure up