

Equality 2025 – the United Kingdom Advisory Network on Disability Equality Work Plan 2007 to 2008

What is Equality 2025?

Equality 2025 has been formed to enable the views of disabled people across the UK to inform and influence the Westminster government policy making, and contribute to the development of policies and services.

The workplan and how the content was decided

This work plan covers the period July 2007 to March 2008 and is the first for Equality 2025. It sets out the work that Equality 2025 members intend to carry out during this time. It should be noted that the plan may be subject to change to allow other urgent pieces of work to be added at short notice as required and agreed.

Equality 2025 was formally launched in December 2006 and the first few months of work have mainly involved establishing working arrangements and starting to build relationships with Government. The members have therefore selected some of the content of this first work plan from feedback from various recent consultations with disabled people carried out by the Office for Disability Issues. However, a priority for the Network now will be to directly engage with disabled people throughout the UK, through a variety of methods, to gain the views of disabled people to help decide the content of the future work plans.

How will people know what Equality 2025 have done?

This current work plan will be included in the Equality 2025's first annual report which will be published in late 2007. Future annual reports will measure the progress against the previous year's workplan as well as publishing the work plan for the following year.

How Equality 2025 has organised itself and will work with Government

Equality 2025 has created nine sub groups; and a Devolved Forum to cover the interests of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The nine sub groups divide into Policy Groups and Operational Groups. The Diversity

group (see Para 9.1) and the Devolved Forum (see Para 10.1) have cross-cutting interests over all the policy groups. The Operational Groups have been formed to ensure that Equality 2025 delivers its responsibilities in the most efficient and effective way possible.

The five Policy sub groups are built around key elements of the Life Chances Report¹. Equality 2025 will focus on specific objectives, communicate with key government departments and also help to build capacity amongst disabled people and their organisations. Each Group will seek to work closely with government to convey the views of disabled people into the policy making process. The objectives and actions for each of these groups are detailed on the following pages.

¹ Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People published January 2005 by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit

The Groups and their objectives

1. Independent Living and Family Support

Objective: Work with government to provide disabled people with the choice, empowerment and freedom to live independently.

1.1. Action: Establish dialogue with disabled people and their organisations in order to reflect their views to government departments responsible for taking forward plans/actions arising as a result of the Independent Living Review.

Time scale: On publication of the Independent Living Review strategy expected in late 2007.

1.2. Action: Take an active role in the Department of Health led project to deliver recommendation 4.3 of the Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People report. (...”each locality should have a user led organisation modelled on existing Centres for Independent Living by 2010”.)

Time scale: Ongoing

2. Early Years, Education, Children and Young People

Objective: Explore the case for inclusive early years and education at every stage and see how this links into the experience of transitions into adult life for disabled young people.

2.1. Action: working with the Independent Living and Family Support sub-group, write an advice note to Government identifying the benefits of inclusive early years education and effective transitional practice in improving the life chances of disabled learners.

Time scale: January 2008

2.2. Action: Work with Department for Children, Schools, and Families on the implementation of the 'Engaging Children and Young People,' and with the Department for Children Schools and Families and Department of Health on "Aiming High for Disabled Children" strategies to ensure that the views of disabled children and young people are listened to on issues and policies relating to their lives.

Time scale: March 2008

3. Employment and Benefits

Objective: To help improve disabled people's access to employment and training and their progression through and retention within the labour market.

3.1. Action: Work with the Department for Work and Pensions Customer Insight Review Team to map the disabled person's journey through the benefit system.

Time scale: March 2008.

3.2. Action: Liaise with the Disability Employment Advisory Committee to help maintain the profile and importance of employment in delivering equality for disabled people.

Time scale: ongoing

3.3. Action: Work with the Review of Disability Services team to keep up to date with developments. Support the development of the Review by helping to identify how to get the most out of the links to the employment work that is done by social services.

Time scale: March 2008.

3.4. Action: To help identify any additional barriers experienced by disabled people who require social services assistance to enable them to access disability employment services.

Time scale: March 2008.

Action: work to remove the barriers to disabled people applying for and taking up public appointments.

Time Frame: Ongoing

4. Health

Objective: Explore how barriers to health provision for disabled people, in particular those groups identified as being most at risk, can be removed and provision improved.

Action: Work with the Department of Health and appropriate bodies to support the implementation of the

recommendations of the Disability Rights Commission's report on health inequalities.

Time scale: Ongoing

4.1. Action: To work with the independent inquiry into access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities to ensure that people with learning disabilities are encouraged and allowed to participate fully and equally.

Time scale: November 2007

5. Rights, Justice and Citizenship

Objective: Promote the needs of disabled people in advice to Government on proposed legislation and existing human rights policy.

5.1. Action: Work with the Disability Committee of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and others to advise and ensure that the proposed Single Equalities Bill does not contain provisions which adversely impact on existing rights for disabled people.

Time scale: Ongoing

5.2. Action: Work with the Office for Disability Issues to support the process for ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

Time scale: Ongoing

Operational and cross-cutting groups

Two sub groups support the work of Equality 2025 and facilitate its relationship with disabled people and Government.

6. Media and External Relations:

Objective: Establish and promote Equality 2025 as an effective means of conveying the voices of disabled people to Government.

6.1 Action: Develop an effective media and public relations strategy giving Equality 2025 a high public profile and engaging a wide range of disabled people. Specifically, agree Equality 2025 branding and logo and work with the Office for Disability Issues to establish appropriate communication channels to reach disabled people and their organisations.

Time scale: February 2008

6.2 Action: Set up a website and group e-mail address.

Time scale: November 2007.

6.3 Action: Organise and deliver at least one public meeting to consult with disabled people on particular issues and to inform the development of the next workplan.

Time scale: November 2007.

6.4 Action: Work with existing disability organisations (both of and for disabled people) to maximise contacts with disabled people).

Time scale: Ongoing

7. Working with Government

Objective: Establish mutually beneficial relationships with key Ministers and civil servants responsible for delivering equality for disabled people.

7.1 Action: Engage with and contribute to the 'Effective Consultation' review being carried out by the Cabinet Office.

Time scale: October 2007.

7.2 Action: Develop the skills necessary to sustain continual effective communication with Government.

Time scale: March 2008.

8. Management:

Objective: Ensure that Equality 2025 delivers its Work Plan and other responsibilities efficiently, effectively and within its agreed resources and member's allocated time.

8.1 Action: Work with sub groups to help deliver the work plan in the most efficient way while maintaining effective communication with the Secretariat.

Time scale: Ongoing

8.2 Action: Ensure that Equality 2025 agrees their working relationship with other advisory and statutory bodies by developing protocols and agreements to ensure effective methods of communication and cooperation.

Time scale: Ongoing

Cross-cutting policy groups

There are two cross-cutting groups, one monitoring diversity and another dealing with issues affecting Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

9. Diversity

Objective: Engage with the hardest to reach groups and individuals from a range of backgrounds and communities across the UK, particularly those who are marginalised or excluded, and those who face multiple discrimination.

9.1 Action: Ensure there is a member from the diversity sub group in each Equality 2025 sub group to advise on diversity and equality issues, and to help promote greater understanding and awareness of the issues in government.

Time scale: Ongoing

9.2 Action: Identify and plan how to best to reach out to individuals who do not belong to organised groups, such as older people, particularly those who do not identify themselves as 'disabled'.

Time scale: March 2008

9.3 Action: Establish links and build relationships with organisations representing these diverse groups

Time scale: Ongoing

10 The Devolved Forum

Objective: Ensure the interests of disabled people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are understood and included in advice on reserved matters provided to the UK Government and best practice is shared as appropriate with the devolved administrations.

10.1 Action: The Forum members will build working relationships with officials in the devolved administrations, Westminster government officials working in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland Offices, local policy experts, local disability organisations and disabled people in order to inform and comment on reserved matters from a devolved perspective.

Time scale: Ongoing