



Equality 2025
The United Kingdom Advisory Network for
Disability Equality

Second Report
June 2008–March 2009

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Note: This report covers the period June 2008 to March 2009. Further reports will cover the year from April to March.

History of Equality 2025

How we came about

In 2005, the Government published the report 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People'. Outlining an ambitious vision for improving disabled people's lives by 2025, it included the recommendation that disabled people be involved in policy development and delivery.

To fulfil this commitment, Equality 2025, The United Kingdom Advisory Network for Disability Equality, was established in December 2006.

An independent body set up to offer the Westminster Government advice and expertise on disability equality issues, the name was chosen to reflect the Government's pledge to achieve equality for disabled people by 2025.

The group currently has a membership of 19 members and represents the whole of the UK - England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. A permanent Chair was appointed in December 2008.

It is sponsored by (but is not part of) the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) and is responsible to the Minister for Disabled People, Jonathan Shaw.

Equality 2025's remit

What we do

Equality 2025 is an advisory body. It offers disability equality information, knowledge and advice to assist the Government in its vision for disability equality by 2025. It has a wide range of duties, which include:

- commenting on government initiatives and advising at an early stage on the impact these will have on disabled people
- gathering the views of disabled people, including those from hard to reach groups and those that do not describe themselves as disabled but are covered under the Disability Discrimination Act
- advising government departments on how they can engage effectively and meaningfully with disabled people
- working to a programme agreed in advance with a range of government departments and disabled people
- celebrating the diversity of disabled people and highlighting the multiple barriers to participation that many people face.

How Equality 2025 supports the Government's objectives and policies

How we are making a difference

In order to influence and develop policy, it is essential that Equality 2025 is involved at the earliest stage of policy development. Since its inception, the group has worked hard to build and develop relationships with civil servants and ministers to ensure that disability equality is considered a key priority across government.

The group has an annual Workplan which is developed with disabled people and government officials, and approved by Jonathan Shaw, the Minister for Disabled People.

Main areas addressed in the 2008/09 Workplan were:

- 1 Independent Living
- 2 Equalities
- 3 Human Rights
- 4 Engagement.

Over the last year, Equality 2025 has advised on issues ranging from employment and improving services for young disabled people, through to ratification of the UN Convention and the new Equality Bill. For more information, please see pages 7-9.

Membership

Who's who?

The group currently has 19 members, all of whom are disabled people. They bring a diverse range of skills and experience from a variety of backgrounds including education, campaigning, and the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Members are appointed through an open recruitment exercise and each member serves a three-year appointment.

Individual members work approximately two days each month to deliver the Workplan.

The group meets quarterly to draft advice and discuss policy issues and services with government officials.

Members as at 31 March 2009

Chair – Rowen Jade

Deputy Chair – Zara Todd

Haji Saghir Alam
Simone Aspis
Prabhat Barot
Michelle Daley
Nick Danagher
Clenton Farquharson
Miro Griffiths
Kirsten Hearn
Eleanor Thoe Lisney
Dave McCormick
Gary McGladdery
Sarah Newman
Andy Rickell
Richard Rieser
Steve Scott
Katherine Thomas
Fiona Wallace

Advice to Government during 2008-09

What we achieved

During the period covered by this report (June 2008-March 2009), Equality 2025's Workplan focused on four main areas:

- 1 Independent Living
- 2 Equalities
- 3 Human Rights
- 4 Engagement.

Engagement

Engagement spans each of Equality 2025's work areas in order to involve disabled people and collect their views. These views are incorporated into advice to the Government on policies and services.

The group has engaged with disabled people in a variety of ways, including through its Annual National Public Meeting in Birmingham, its regional events across the UK (Cornwall, Newcastle, Walsall, Darlington, and Aberdeen) and via its website and blog.

Independent Living

- Equality 2025 provided advice and evidence during the final stages of the Independent Living Strategy consultation process, and in the development of the Government's response. This resulted in the group co-producing the drafting and implementation of the Independent Living Strategy with the ODI. Equality 2025 was pleased to become a member of the new scrutiny group and continues to advise on this Strategy.
- The group provided advice to ministers and officials at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in June 2008 during the development of the Welfare Reform Green Paper. Equality 2025 successfully argued for 'inclusion' to be considered as an important element for the successful employment of disabled people. It also gave further advice and evidence on other policy initiatives and has now established ongoing dialogue with officials across DWP.
- The group advised ministers and officials at the Department of Health (DH) on a number of issues including the User-led Organisations Project and Social Care Reform. Equality 2025 is now a member of DH's Care and Support Green Paper – Equalities Working Group.
- The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions set up the Right to Control Advisory Group to advise the Government on aspects of the Welfare Reform Green Paper. Equality 2025 was involved in this resulting in:
 - an invitation to join the Advisory Group

- its advice being taken into account in the subsequent White Paper ‘Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future’, where the Government announced that it would legislate for a Right to Control for disabled people to be piloted in trailblazing local authority areas from 2010
- its advice influencing the plans that the Government made about its national consultation on the Right to Control. This consultation ends on 30 September 2009 and Equality 2025 is using its engagement meetings to find out what disabled people think about this issue. It will continue to give advice to the Government about plans to trailblaze the Right to Control.

Equalities

- The group assisted government departments in developing their first Secretary of State reports on the Disability Equality Duty. For example, Equality 2025 helped Communities and Local Government (CLG) to raise the profile and awareness of the report throughout the organisation at a launch event. In addition, advice was given to the Government Equalities Office (GEO) resulting in the establishment of a working group of disabled people to help GEO further develop its scheme.
- The group provided advice to the GEO on the Public Service Performance Indicators, which led to Equality 2025 being invited to join GEO’s Unfair Treatment Project Reference Group.
- The group gave advice to both ODI and GEO on various issues relating to the Equality Bill.

Human Rights

- The group held a series of confidential meetings with four government departments that were proposing to lodge reservations to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People, once ratified. Equality 2025 provided advice and evidence relating to these proposed reservations.
- As a result of the meetings with officials:
 - Equality 2025 arranged an engagement event with disabled people in October focusing specifically on the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. This helped the group provide ODI with advice on both ratification and implementation of the UN Convention
 - Equality 2025 provided Jonathan Shaw, Minister for Disabled People, with advice on the next steps towards ratification, monitoring and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People, prior to his appearance at the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

Beyond the key areas of the Workplan, Equality 2025:

- advised officials from the Norwegian Government on the progress of implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in the UK, and gave recommendations for the implications of Norway's draft Discrimination Act, planned for gradual implementation beginning in January 2009.
- provided evidence to the Speaker's Conference in January 2009 regarding the disproportionately low number of disabled people in Parliament, and recommended how to increase these numbers.

Equality 2025 funding for 2008-09

How we spent our budget

Equality 2025 is funded by the ODI. The group was allocated a budget of £546,000 in the 2008-09 financial year. The total expenditure during this period was £506,000.

Members are public appointees and as such receive a fee for their involvement in the group. Fees are paid on a daily or hourly rate (as appropriate) for preparing for and attending meetings (including travel time), and carrying out appropriate activities/tasks as necessary. Members can claim for expenses associated with these activities. Fees are £193 (daily rate), or an hourly rate of £27.50. Members are required to work approximately 20-25 days a year.

The annual fee for the Chair's post is £40,000. The Chair is appointed to work 100 days a year.

Contacting Equality 2025

How you can get in touch

If you are a disabled person, a disability organisation or a civil servant we want to hear from you.

Disabled people are at the heart of our work. It's essential that we hear your views on a wide range of issues to get an accurate picture of what is important to disabled people in the UK today.

Equality 2025 is committed to working alongside government to improve the lives of disabled people. We work to Chatham House rules and can provide advice, in confidence, if necessary. If you work for a government department and you think we could add value to your current or future work, please do get in touch.

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We also have a website at www.odi.gov.uk/equality2025 and we encourage you to share your views on our blog – equality2025.wordpress.com.