



Equality Duties

Assessing the Cost & Cost Effectiveness of the Specific
Race, Disability & Gender Equality Duties

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Government
Equalities Office

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**ASSESSING THE COSTS AND COST EFFECTIVENESS
OF
THE SPECIFIC RACE, DISABILITY & GENDER
EQUALITY DUTIES**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Schneider-Ross undertook this research for the Government Equalities Office under its Not For Profit organisation. The project began in early October 2008 and this report was finalised in May 2009.

This Executive Summary sets out the research aims, methodology, key findings, conclusions and implications.

Research Aims

The research aims were:

1. To identify which aspects of the current separate specific equality duties are believed to be effective and why
2. To identify which aspects of the current separate specific equality duties are not believed to be effective and why
3. To identify the costs associated with the implementation of the equality duties
4. To identify the improved outcomes, and where possible the financial benefit, of work on the current equality duties
5. In the light of all of the above, to draw some conclusions about the cost effectiveness of the current equality duties

Research Methodology

There were two key aspects to the research methodology: (1) a survey that was distributed across the public sector and (2) a set of interviews held with a selection of survey respondents to explore their responses in more depth.

174 responses were received to the survey:

Local Authorities	43
Health Bodies	24
All other respondents to the main survey	55
Schools	52

33 respondents were involved in the qualitative discussions that followed up on the survey.

Key Findings

The full findings are outlined in the report, which is structured in line with the research aims – starting with perceptions of the effectiveness of the specific equality duties, then outlining costs, benefits and views about cost effectiveness of the different elements of the duties.

The specific duties were widely perceived to be effective:

- More than half of the respondents rated each activity required by the specific duties as “very effective” or “effective” (53% to 81%)
- Producing and publicising the schemes and training up staff on their responsibilities were deemed to be effective by 70% or more of the respondents
- The data-driven approach (monitoring, consulting, setting targets and reporting progress) was also widely endorsed (62% to 76%)

Most respondents were not able to give an accurate indication of implementation costs. The main cost highlighted was increased staff time dedicated to equality and 61% of respondents had increased this as a result of the specific duties.

The majority of responding organisations (63%) had not had to de-prioritise other activities “very much” or “at all”.

The overwhelming majority of respondents felt that they were realising benefits as a result of their work on the implementation of the specific duties:

- Many organisations (over 80% of respondents) reported that they had seen improvements in the way that their organisations made decisions or allocated resources
- 97% of the main survey respondents had seen either “significant” or “some improvement” in at least one specific outcome
- For some, they felt the specific duties had been a catalyst for a positive shift in culture, which brought equalities into the “mainstream”.

Most respondents did not feel that the specific duties required them to take disproportionate action – and this applied to each of the duties.

However, these positive results should not entirely cloud the fact that a minority do feel that the duties are burdensome and ineffective:

- A minority (at the most a third) of respondents did feel that some actions required greater resources than the value they could deliver
- Impact assessment caused the most comment in this regard and was rated lower in terms of effectiveness than all the other elements of the specific duties (albeit that still meant 53% rated it as effective).
- The integration of equality into procurement was the other aspect of the specific duties that was considered less effective and this therefore represents a considerable, but under-utilised, lever for change.

Conclusions & Implications

Organisations have been on a learning curve since the introduction of the race equality duty in 2000. At first, many did take a rather mechanistic approach to the legislative requirements which accordingly were felt to be somewhat burdensome and bureaucratic.

Whilst a minority still feel this to be the case, the existing specific equality duties are clearly widely accepted and seen as effective. This is the case across the sectors. Whilst school respondents are slightly more guarded, and more likely to feel that this is simply what they are already trying to do, their level of support was still high – with 76% seeing improvements in curriculum teaching and learning and 48% in involving parents and the community.

The move towards an integrated duty, across all the equality “strands,” is seen as logical – almost half (48%) of respondents have already anticipated this shift.

Critical to the effectiveness of the implementation of the duties is senior level support - and it is clearly up to senior management to ensure that a proportionate approach is adopted.

In order to support organisations in this regard there needs to be simple guidance that helps them focus on equality outcomes rather than complex processes.

The report concludes with ten implications:

1. Do move towards an integrated duty - many are anticipating this and see it as logical and effective, and align the timescales for reporting.
2. Recognise that there will be some backlash and resistance, but be confident that organisations are on a learning curve and that these can be overcome

3. Don't change the core requirements too much as this could undermine the learning that has gone on to date
4. Stay with the strong data-driven approach, further encourage a strong focus on outcomes and senior management reporting
5. Strongly encourage local co-operation across public sector organisations – particularly with regard to consultation and community engagement
6. Strongly encourage rigorous and transparent benchmarking within sectors and allow this to drive implementation (rather than a too prescriptive, one-size-fits all approach)
7. Provide clear, timely and simple guidance which illustrates the benefits of the actions that organisations have taken on race, disability and gender
8. Emphasise in this guidance the need for impact assessments to be proportionate and encourage organisations to focus on a few key priorities
9. In this guidance ensure that there are examples of smaller organisations taking sensible, proportionate action. Specifically, improve guidance and support for head teachers
10. Consider requirements to increase the focus on procurement – with monitoring of equality outcomes relating to contracted out services

THE RESEARCH TEAM

This research was completed under the Schneider~Ross Not for Profit organisation.

The research team consisted of Professor Paul Anand, Anjana Nathwani, Robin Schneider and Alexis Walmsley.

Alexis led on the development of the survey and database and results and also conducted many of the qualitative interviews. Anjana helped pilot the survey and also carried out a number of the qualitative discussions.

As an economist, Professor Paul Anand from the Open University provided vital and consistently helpful advice, analysis and guidance on costs, benefits and cost effectiveness.

Raquel Anstee de Mas, Schneider~Ross Not For Profit Project Manager, provided the highest quality support throughout the project.

Robin Schneider led the research team and wrote the final report.

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- Clive Botterill from **the Equality, Diversity & RDS Team at the Fire & Resilience Directorate, Fire & Rescue Service Development Division at Communities & Local Government**

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- Sue Ollerearnshaw, Schneider~Ross Associate
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- Nilam Vyas, South West Essex PCT
- Wheatley Park Secondary School

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