

**Business Plan 2008/9
Summary**



**Equality and
Human Rights
Commission**

**Bringing people
together**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission aims to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between all people and promote and protect human rights, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

Launched on 1 October 2007, the Commission is an independent statutory body established under the Equality Act 2006. Our sponsor minister is Harriet Harman MP, Minister for Women and Equality, Government Equalities Office. We took over the responsibilities of the three former equality commissions:

the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission. We also have responsibility for other key areas of equality – age, gender reassignment, religion or belief, and sexual orientation – as well as for human rights.



New beginnings

The launch of the new Equality and Human Rights Commission marked a significant moment in the history of equality and human rights in Britain. Our business plan sets out our aims and strategic priorities for our first full year of operation. This summary version brings together our strategic priorities, the core themes underlying our work and the key delivery targets we have set for 2008/9.

The Commission is the first British organisation of its kind, heralding a major shift in the way

we tackle inequality and promote human rights. We will prevent discrimination by addressing the causes that lie behind it, encouraging systemic change instead of relying on individual legal remedies.

Our agenda is ambitious: we want to shape the society we all live in, changing the way organisations and individuals approach equality, human rights and good relations between people, regardless of their backgrounds. We want to break down the barriers that hold

‘ Equality isn’t a minority interest: a fairer society benefits everyone ,

people back, releasing talent and expanding opportunities for all.

Our overall objective for 2008/9 is to bring people together. We will focus on the need, for all who live in Britain, to have a deeper sense of commitment and mutual respect based on shared values with fairness at their core.

We recognise that without true equality of opportunity for all, society will remain divided. Equality isn't a minority interest: a fairer society benefits everyone in terms of economic prosperity, quality of life and good relations within and among communities. The responsibility for building a successful society rests with all of us.

We have been working with many different people and organisations to develop our business plan. We need to continue to work with all those who share our commitment to improving society, from central and local government to the private, public, community and voluntary sectors.

We have created a set of strategic priorities based on narrowing the gaps between people, reflecting the integrated nature of our remit and acknowledging how different equality and human rights issues intersect or overlap. By focusing on them we will help to improve opportunities for individuals and communities throughout Britain.

We will tackle the root causes of discrimination and prejudice. We will strive to give everyone the chance to participate in our society. We will make the Commission a strong, independent voice for equality and justice. The aim of creating a diverse and equal society is the greatest challenge facing Britain today. Together we can make it a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicola Brewer
Chief Executive

Our four strategic priorities

1 Analyse, define and target key equality and human rights challenges

We will analyse and measure inequality at all stages of people's lives to build up a sound base of knowledge and evidence to inform our policy work and enforce the law.

2 Change policy and organisational practice to provide better public services alongside an efficient and dynamic economy

We will seek to transform the policies and practices of government departments, public institutions and private sector organisations through our role as an enabler, persuader and enforcer.

‘ Following consultation and involvement with our stakeholders, we have developed four strategic priorities for the coming year ’

3 Engage, involve and empower the public, especially people from disadvantaged communities and areas

True equality of opportunity is about making sure that everyone has the power to help shape the society they live in. We want to give individuals the chance to participate fully in local and national democracy, as well as in local communities.

4 Anticipate social change, develop new narratives and reach new audiences in ways that strengthen equality and human rights

We will commission research to help us fully understand the forces that create inequality in Britain. We will make a compelling case putting human rights at the heart of British culture and to show how they reflect essential values of fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy.

‘ True equality of opportunity is about making sure that everyone has the power to help shape the society they live in ,

Core themes

Developing core themes for our work

To achieve our goals we have to consider the barriers and opportunities that people have throughout their lifetimes and how these affect their health, education, employment and their degree of involvement in civic and political life (their 'life chances').

We can only eradicate discrimination and create real equality of opportunity for everyone by linking and integrating the different areas of our remit. Rather than focusing on individual areas of equality we have developed four themes to guide our policy work.



Themes and work programmes

1 Narrow the poverty gap: reduce social exclusion

We will promote measures to reduce disadvantage and improve economic wellbeing for all communities.

In 2008/9 our work will include:

- Working with the Department for Children, Families and Schools in England on the Government's children's plan.
- Working with the Olympics Delivery Authority to agree a charter of achievement that helps to tackle social and economic exclusion not just in London but throughout Britain.



2 **Narrow the caring gap: ensure care reform promotes equality and human rights for all**

We will develop and pursue an agenda for social care reform that addresses everyone's needs, putting human rights at the heart of public services.

In 2008/9 our work will include:

- Putting in place a comprehensive policy development and influencing strategy to shape central Government's forthcoming Green Paper on social care reform.
- Commissioning a cost-benefit analysis of investment in the social care sector to influence future government spending decisions. We have already begun parallel work in Scotland to embed the principles of independent living in social care services.
- Using the statutory general equality duties to make sure that inspection and performance management systems include equality and human rights.

3 Narrow the opportunity gap: increase social mobility among disadvantaged groups

We will work with public institutions and the private sector to widen the availability of opportunities through education and employment. We will use our powers to push for fair access to goods, facilities and services for all.

In 2008/9 our work will include:

- Publishing a guide on integration in the workplace and launching a website for employers to help them promote equality and diversity by adopting practices such as flexible working.
- Commissioning and publishing research on what workers aged over 50 expect from work and life, the problems they face in the labour market and potential solutions.

4 Narrow the power, inclusion and integration gap: strengthen good relations by forging greater understanding between communities

We will promote our vision of an integrated society based on shared values and mutual obligations, where people from different beliefs and backgrounds live and work together.

In 2008/9 our work will include:

- Monitoring tensions and hate crime incidents and taking action to promote good relations.
- Supporting the extension of Scottish criminal law to include offences aggravated by prejudice towards a person's presumed disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Investigating how disabled people are made the targets of crime and violence and identifying potential interventions to prevent this.

We have set 12 key delivery targets to underpin our strategic priorities. Each target has been developed through consultation and involvement with our stakeholders.

Our key delivery targets

Target 1 is a general target that relates to all four strategic priorities

Targets 2 and 3 relate to our first strategic priority

1 We will create a three-year strategic plan that is relevant both for our stakeholders and the general public. It will be underpinned by an original measurement framework that defines what we mean by equality.

2 Influencing the creation of a landmark Equality Act to eradicate discrimination and release talent, tackle long-standing structural pay gaps, guarantee fair access for all to goods, facilities and services and help promote good relations between people from different backgrounds. We will help to devise a streamlined public sector duty that focuses on achieving practical results.

3 Creating a Britain-wide advertising, marketing and communications campaign to promote equality, develop good relations and support and protect human rights.

Targets 4 – 7 relate to our second strategic priority

- 4** Holding a public inquiry looking at attitudes to human rights and how widely the Human Rights Act (HRA) is being used in public services. We will draw on the results of the inquiry to build up a solid base of evidence and good practice about the use of the HRA. We will publish the results of the inquiry in March 2009.

Towards the end of 2008 we will be holding a series of events to mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 10th anniversary of the Human Rights Act receiving royal assent.



Continued

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- 5** Taking at least fifty actions involving the strategic use of our legal powers. We will use our enforcement powers pro-actively through formal investigations and judicial reviews. We will intervene in appeal cases and initiate specific inquiries to promote and protect human rights. And we will use our statutory powers to intervene before the courts.
 - 6** Working with private and public sector organisations to promote fairness at work. We will ensure that public authorities comply with existing equality legislation, helping them to use the public sector duties to provide better public services by responding to individual needs. We will negotiate memorandums of understanding with the major public service inspectorates. We will tackle exploitation by campaigning with trade unions and business organisations for enforceable employment rights for all workers.
 - 7** Influencing government strategies on the future of social care to promote independence and enable people to combine the demands of caring and work.

Targets 8 and 9 relate to our third strategic priority

- 8** Providing grant-making and capacity development programmes that are open and transparent and that help to build our relationships with voluntary sector and community-based organisations.
- 9** Developing a multi-media digital strategy to help us reach new audiences effectively and to inform and engage the public about equality, human rights and good relations.

Targets 10 – 12 relate to our fourth strategic priority

- 10** Promoting good relations between people of different backgrounds by bringing them together through activities such as camps, an arts competition, youth conferences and the Croeso programme in Wales.
- 11** Investigating the impact of social housing allocation on community cohesion and good relations between people from different racial groups.
- 12** Implementing a programme to promote ‘new voices’, reflecting our role of empowering the unheard or marginalised. We will search for new audiences and give them a platform to speak.

This leaflet is also available in Welsh and in alternative formats. To order any of our publications, contact us online or by phone.

www.equalityhumanrights.com

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