

# DEVELOPING THE EQUALITY MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK: SELECTING THE INDICATORS

## Summary and list of broad indicators

### The Equality Measurement Framework

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) has been working with the Government Equalities Office (GEO), the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and a range of other stakeholders and subject experts to develop a measurement framework that can be used to assess equality and human rights across a range of domains relevant to 21st century life.

These domains focus directly on those things in life that people say are important for them to actually *do* and *be*. The framework monitors the central and valuable things in life that people actually achieve – such as enjoying an adequate standard of living, being healthy, having good opportunities for education and learning, enjoying legal security, and being free from crime and the fear of crime. It is particularly concerned with the position of individuals and groups with regard to characteristics such as age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, transgender and social class.

It is important to note at the outset that the Equality Measurement Framework (EMF) is *not* a performance measurement framework. Rather it provides a baseline of evidence for evaluating progress and deciding priorities. The framework will enable the Commission to discharge its legal duties to monitor social outcomes under the Equality Act 2006. It will also provide data that may help Government and other public bodies prioritise their activities to meet the public sector duties on equality. As data are collected to fill the framework it is planned that a web-based tool will be developed to make the data accessible and useful to all groups and individuals with an interest in promoting equality and human rights in Britain.

The development of the EMF has built on extensive consultation over the last three years and will contribute to ensuring that appropriate systems for statistical monitoring are further developed and secured.

### Foundations of the Equality Measurement Framework

The development of the EMF has drawn on three key inputs:

- The capability approach developed by Amartya Sen

- The international human rights framework
- Extensive consultation with the general public, individuals and groups at risk of discrimination and disadvantage.

The EMF is designed to measure society's progress towards an equal society, defined as shown in box 1, after extensive consultation to ensure its salience for modern Britain.

**Box 1      A society based on equality and human rights**

An equal society protects and promotes the central and valuable freedoms and real opportunities of each person, securing human rights for all and ensuring that no-one is unfairly disadvantaged.

In an equal society, central and valuable freedoms and real opportunities are not unconstrained, but are limited by the need to guarantee the same freedoms and opportunities for all.

In an equal society, institutions and individuals respect the diversity of people and their goals, address their different needs and situations, and remove the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.

This definition of the type of society to which Britain can aspire and measure its progress towards recognises diversity and reflects current disadvantage, as well as aspirations. It incorporates responsibility and obligations of individuals and institutions and includes human rights in a way that explains what the term means. It clarifies the connection between individuals' values and freedom for everyone, and includes the concept of fairness.

**Aspects of inequality**

Indicators within the EMF will address three distinct aspects of inequality that can arise between individuals and groups:

- Inequality of outcome - that is, inequality in the central and valuable things in life that individuals and groups actually achieve
- Inequality of process - reflecting inequalities in treatment through discrimination by other individuals and groups, or by institutions and systems, including not being treated with dignity and respect

- Inequality of autonomy - that is, inequality in the degree of empowerment people have to make decisions affecting their lives, how much choice and control they really have given their circumstances.

This means that in developing and applying the EMF, information about unequal outcomes will be considered alongside information about inequalities in process - whether there is discrimination, or other aspects of unequal treatment, such as a lack of dignity and respect; and information about inequalities in autonomy - who did the choosing, the adequacy of the options available, and whether the outcomes would have been chosen, given real choice. Box 2 provides examples of each type of inequality.

All three of these are given an independence, status and value within the EMF. It is not sufficient to have equality of outcome without choices, or in the absence of fair treatment, dignity and respect. They are all distinct aspects of inequality that will be evaluated and tracked through the measurement framework.

## **Box 2 Aspects of inequality: Outcomes, autonomy and process**

### **Example 1: Inequality of outcome**

Tracey and Yvonne are 16-year-olds. Tracey has a hearing impairment, she uses a hearing aid and lip reads, but her school does not always take account of her needs. As a result, Tracey cannot get as much out of the curriculum as Yvonne, and her GCSE grades do not reflect her potential. This is inequality in **outcomes**.

**Example 2: Inequality of process.** Ishan, who is from a Pakistani ethnic background, and Mark, who is White, both apply for a job as a trainee manager in a car hire firm. They have the same qualifications and the same work experience. Mark is offered an interview, Ishan is not. Ishan is told, 'Your sort wouldn't fit in round here'. Cases of discrimination of this type, as well as other forms of unequal treatment, such as a lack of dignity and respect, are inequality in **process**. (*reversed order of 2 and 3*)

### **Example 3: Inequality of autonomy**

Ethel and Marie both live in care homes. In both homes, the staff take the residents out for an afternoon each week. In Ethel's home, the staff decide: bingo or shopping. In Marie's home, the residents decide. Cases of inequality in choice and control of this type are inequality in **autonomy**.

## **10 domains of central and valuable freedoms**

These aspects of equality - outcome, process and autonomy - need to be measured for critical areas of life. A two-stage process was used to create a list of these. First, the international human rights framework was used to draw up a core list of what they might be. Second, this list was supplemented and refined through a process of deliberative consultation - a program of workshops and interviews with the general public and with individuals and groups at high risk of discrimination and disadvantage.

This process resulted in the development of a detailed list of these critical areas - known as central and valuable freedoms - grouped under ten headings or domains. These are:

- life
- health
- physical security
- legal security
- education and learning
- standard of living
- productive and valued activities
- individual, family and social life
- identity, expression and self-respect
- participation, influence and voice.

Other, more specific, freedoms are listed under each heading. A complete list of central and valuable freedoms with sub-headings for adults is provided in Appendix 1. (An equivalent list for children is in the process of being developed.)

### **Why use the approach of the EMF?**

Debates about inequality have often focused exclusively on unequal treatment, or on unequal opportunities or on unequal outcomes, but the evidence shows that these are all interconnected. The approach taken in the Equality Measurement Framework aims to embrace aspects of equal treatment, equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. It means having more real opportunities to achieve the things we want to achieve in life, having more independence and genuine choices available, being treated with dignity and respect and having more of a say about important decisions in our own lives. This multi-dimensional approach is about measuring all the aspects that contribute to the 'substantive freedom' to achieve things in life.

This concept captures many of the desirable characteristics that have been highlighted in stakeholder consultations. These include covering multiple domains in which inequality ‘matters’ and recognising the important differences in both the needs of individuals and groups, and of underlying barriers and constraints.

**Using the Equality measurement Framework in practice**

Box 3 summarises the key building blocks of the framework.

<p><b>Box 3      The equality measurement framework: key building blocks</b></p> <p><b>3 aspects of inequality measured:</b></p> <p>outcomes; process (unequal treatment, discrimination, lack of dignity and respect); autonomy (empowerment, choice and control).</p> <p><b>Across 10 domains</b></p> <p>Life; health; physical security; legal security; education and learning; standard of living; productive and valued activities; individual, family and social life; identity, expression and self respect; participation, influence and voice.</p> <p><b>For at least eight characteristics</b></p> <p>Age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, transgender, social class.</p>
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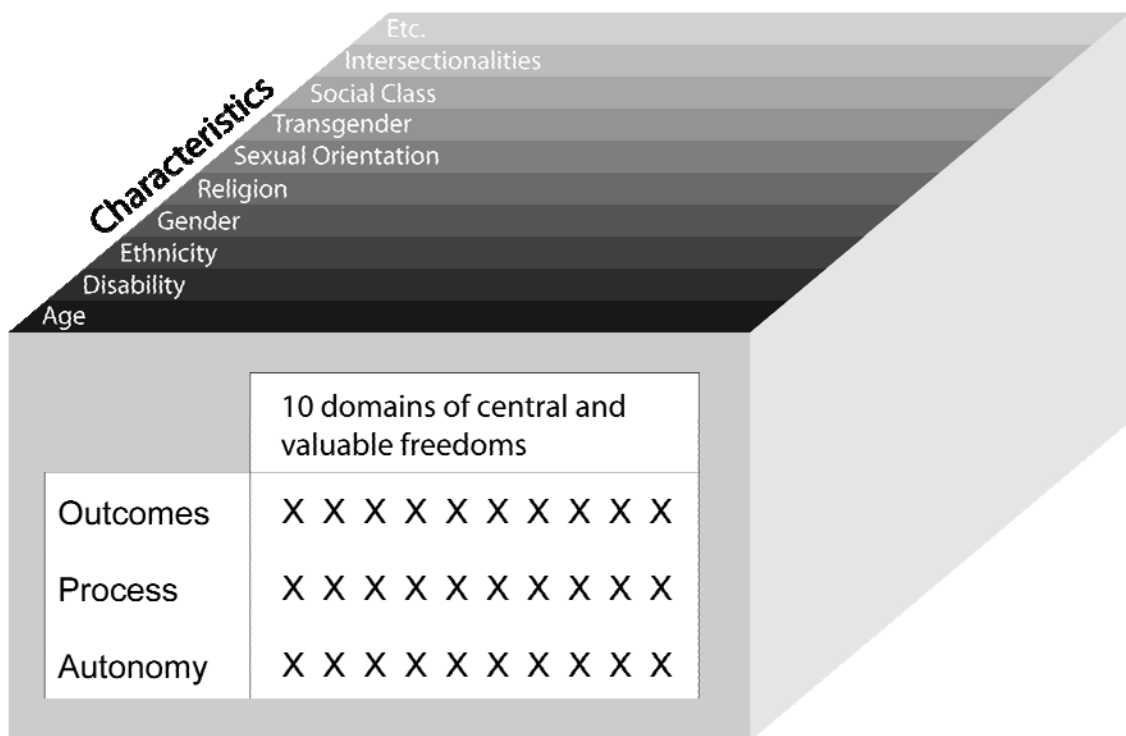
In practice, therefore, the EMF is a 3D matrix where the rows represent the three aspects of inequality discussed above – of outcomes, autonomy and process - and the columns represent the 10 domains of central and valuable freedoms. The layers of the matrix then represent the different characteristics of the groups of particular concern such as social class, gender, ethnicity etc (Figure 1). Combinations of characteristics can also be used to identify intersectional group concerns i.e. those that cut across different characteristics.

For example, the EMF could be used to evaluate the health position of older people in terms of their:

- outcomes or health status

- process, exploring whether older people experience explicit discrimination or other forms of unequal treatment, such as a lack of dignity and respect
- autonomy, questioning if they experience choice and control in relation to their medical treatment, including issues of information and consent.

**Figure 1 The ‘substantive freedom matrix’**



Not only can the EMF be used as a tool to measure inequality but the overall framework can help assess policy interventions and underlying causes of inequality. The freedoms that an individual or a group have are enhanced or constrained by, for example, their access to resources and how well those resources can be used due to social and individual factors.

At the same time, there are underlying factors that affect the available resources and how they are utilised. These include personal characteristics such as social class, ethnicity or age; the level of available resources and their distribution; the way in which society operates and the institutions within that, from the labour market and built environment to the legal system.

For example, everyone should have access to a health service. But if a person does not speak English, this will result in a limitation in the central

and valuable things that the person can do and be. Intervention can alter a person's access (e.g. by providing a translator) or, in the longer term, his or her ability to use resources (e.g. by providing English lessons).

### **The selection of indicators**

There are, of course, hundreds of potential indicators that could be used to provide information for the cells of the matrix shown in figure 1. To make it manageable, extensive consultation and statistical and theoretical work has been done to select 48 indicators in the first instance, that collectively cover important aspects of the domains.

The Commission has worked with the GEO, other government departments, the Scottish and Welsh Governments, the ONS and a broad range of stakeholders and subject experts to identify and agree a set of indicators relating to outcomes and process in each of the domains. (A parallel project is developing the methodology for survey measurement of the autonomy aspect of inequality by 30th November.)

The selection of indicators proceeded in five stages:

1. Drawing up and consulting on selection criteria.
2. Developing a long list of possible indicators, building on the ONS (2007) Equality Data Audit and a review of equality statistics carried out by Sylvia Walby and colleagues (2008) for the Commission.
3. Conducting the first round of consultation with subject specialists and stakeholders.
4. Deriving a provisional shortlist of indicators for each domain and conducting a second round of consultation with subject specialists and stakeholders.
5. Revising the shortlist of indicators in the light of consultation responses, assessing statistical robustness and other technical issues, and producing a final list of agreed indicators.

The consultation process was extensive, with a view to maximising agreement on three to five indicators for each domain. Ten GB-wide domain-specific events were held in London in September 2008, followed by full-day events in Edinburgh and Cardiff in October and November. These events were attended by just under 200 people in total. The second round of consultation included a web consultation,

based on an overall project briefing paper, a paper on selection criteria, a paper on human rights and nine domain-specific papers. In addition, one-to-one meetings and discussions were held with at least 20 data providers and others with particular interests. The project was also guided by a cross-government Policy and Analysis Group, co-ordinated by the GEO and including the devolved administrations, who met several times during the course of the project to review progress and make recommendations. Work in progress was also presented to the GEO Equality Board, and the ONS Equality Measurement Group, which generated useful feedback.

The resulting set of outcome and process indicators for adults that will initially be used for the EMF are set out in Appendix 2.

### **Next steps**

The immediate next steps that are planned are first to populate the framework with data this is, or will shortly be, available from existing data sources and second, alongside this, develop a web-based tool that will allow users easily to interrogate the data from a number of perspectives. The first release of data and the web tool is planned for January 2010. It is hoped that at least 50 per cent of the framework at the GB level will be populated by data at this point, and as close to this proportion of data as possible will be available for England, Scotland and Wales. Plans are also being developed to increase the proportion of the framework filled by data as quickly as possible thereafter.

Together with this summary, a full report of the consultations and detailed statistical work on the framework is being published on-line by the Commission. This sets out a number of recommendations for further development of the measures to be used for the indicators. The aim is to steadily increase the proportion of the framework that can be filled with data, and the extent to which disaggregation is possible by the equalities groups, social class and other groupings that will help describe and analyse progress towards equality and human rights.

In many cases, the recommendations for moving forward focus on the need for question development or the incorporation of additional demographic information in existing surveys (e.g. the addition of sexual orientation variables where these are not included) and to the need for increased sample sizes to support robust disaggregation (e.g. to support the capacity for narrow band analysis by ethnicity or religion and belief, and for within Wales analysis using the Citizenship Survey). In some cases, the recommendations highlight the need for releasing existing

data that is currently not available in the public domain (e.g. in relation to the quality of life in prisons in England).

In other cases, such as moving towards a more victim orientated approach in the development of recorded crime statistics, and of developing national statistics for the non-household population, including indicators of physical abuse of older people living in health and social care establishments, these recommendations build on existing initiatives and trends. In a very limited number of cases, such as in relation to the need for new national statistics to monitor the capability of being and expressing yourself, and having self-respect, the development of new data is required. The partners who have been working on the framework to date will be considering and prioritising these recommendations.

The next steps in developing the EMF aim to ensure that it is embedded for the long-term, and that appropriate systems for monitoring the equality and human rights position of individuals and groups are further developed and secured. It is hoped that this will make a substantial contribution towards identifying priorities which will lead to greater equality in the freedoms people have to achieve the things that are valuable in their lives, the things it is important for them to do and be.

## **References**

Equalities Review (2007) *Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review*, especially Chapter 1 and Annex A

ONS [Office for National Statistics] (2007) Report from the Review of Equality Data (2007)  
[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_social/EDR\\_Final.doc.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_social/EDR_Final.doc.pdf)

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### **Developing the Equality Measurement Framework: selecting the indicators**

by Sabina Alkire, Francesca Bastagli, Tania Burchardt, David Clark, Holly Holder, Solava Ibrahim, Maria Munoz, Paulina Terrazas, Tiffany Tsang and Polly Vizard is published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, July 2009

## **Appendix 1      The list of central and valuable freedoms for adults**

### **The capability to be alive**

including, for example, being able to:

- avoid premature mortality through disease, neglect, injury or suicide
- be protected from being killed or murdered

### **The capability to be healthy**

including, for example, being able to:

- attain the highest possible standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health
- access to timely and impartial information about health and healthcare options, including contraception
- access healthcare, without discrimination and in a culturally sensitive way
- be treated medically, or subject to experiment, only with informed consent
- be assured of patient confidentiality and be free from the stigmatisation associated with some health conditions
- maintain a healthy lifestyle including exercise, sleep and nutrition
- live in a healthy and safe environment including clean air, clean water, and freedom from pollution and other hazards

### **The capability to live in physical security**

including, for example, being able to:

- be free from violence including sexual and domestic violence and violence based on who you are
- be free from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- be protected from physical or sexual abuse (especially by those in positions of authority)
- go out and to use public spaces safely and securely without fear

### **The capability of knowing you will be protected and treated fairly by the law**

including, for example, being able to:

- know you will be treated with equality and non-discrimination before the law
- be secure that the law will protect you from intolerant behaviour, and from reprisals if you make a complaint
- be free from arbitrary arrest and detention

- have fair conditions of detention
- have the right to a fair trial
- access to affordable and high-quality information and advocacy as necessary
- have freedom of movement
- have the right to name, gender and nationality
- own property and financial products including insurance, social security, and pensions in your own right
- know your privacy will be respected.

**The capability to be knowledgeable, to understand and reason, and to have the skills to participate in society**

including, for example, being able to:

- attain the highest possible standard of knowledge, understanding and reasoning
- be fulfilled and stimulated intellectually, including being creative if you so wish
- develop the skills for participation in productive and valued activities, including parenting
- learn about a range of cultures and beliefs and acquire the skills to participate in a diverse society, including learning English
- access education, training and lifelong learning that meets individual needs
- access information and technology necessary to participate in society

**The capability to enjoy a comfortable standard of living, with independence and security**

including, for example, being able to:

- enjoy an adequate and secure standard of living including nutrition, clothing, housing, warmth, social security, social services and utilities, and being cared for and supported when necessary
- get around inside and outside the home, and to access transport and public places
- live with independence, dignity and self-respect
- have choice and control over where and how you live
- have control over personal spending
- enjoy your home in peace and security
- access green spaces and the natural world
- share in the benefits of scientific progress including medical advances and information and technology

## **The capability to engage in productive and valued activities**

including, for example, being able to:

- have a decent paid job, with support where necessary
- care for others, including children and parents
- do something useful and have the value of your work recognised even if unpaid
- have rest and leisure, including holidays, and respite from caring responsibilities
- choose a balance between paid and unpaid work, care and leisure on an equal basis with others
- work in just and favourable conditions, including health and safety, fair treatment during pregnancy, maternity and paternity, fair pay, reasonable hours, and freedom from harassment or discrimination
- not be forced to work in a particular occupation or without pay
- not be prevented from working in a particular occupation without good reason

## **The capability to enjoy individual, family and social life**

including, for example, being able to:

- develop as a person, including self-identity
- develop your sense of values and other beliefs
- formulate and pursue goals and objectives for yourself
- hope for the future
- develop and maintain self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence
- have a private life and some personal space, including protection of personal data
- access emotional support
- know that someone will look out for you
- have peace of mind
- form intimate relationships, friendships and a family
- celebrate on special occasions
- be confident that your primary relationships will be treated with dignity and respect
- spend time with, and care for, others, including wider family
- enjoy independence and equality in primary relationships including marriage
- be free in matters of sexual relationships and reproduction
- enjoy special support during pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption

## **The capability of being and expressing yourself, and having self-respect**

including, for example, being able to:

- have freedom of conscience, belief and religion
- have freedom of cultural identity and expression of gender
- have freedom of expression
- communicate, including using information and communication technologies, and use your own language
- engage in cultural practices, in community with other members of your chosen group or groups and across communities
- have self-respect
- live without fear of humiliation, harassment, or abuse based on who you are
- be confident that you will be treated with dignity and respect
- access and use public spaces freely

## **The capability to participate in decision-making, have a voice and influence**

including, for example, being able to:

- participate in decision-making and make decisions affecting your own life independently
- participate in the formulation of government policy, locally and nationally
- participate in non-governmental organisations concerned with public and political life
- participate in democratic free and fair elections
- get together with others, peacefully
- participate in the local community
- form and join civil organisations and solidarity groups, including trade unions

## **Appendix 2      Summary of indicators corresponding to the capability list for adults**

### **A. LIFE**

1. Life expectancy
2. Homicide
3. Other specific-cause mortality rates
4. Death rates from non-natural causes for people resident or detained in public or private institutions

### **B. HEALTH**

1. Limiting illness, disability and mental health
2. Subjective evaluation of current health status
3. Dignity and respect in health treatment
4. Healthy living
5. Vulnerability to accidents

### **C. PHYSICAL SECURITY**

1. Proportion that are victims of violent crime
2. Proportion that are victims of hate crime
3. Physical security for people resident or detained in public and private institutions
4. Fear of Crime

### **D. LEGAL SECURITY**

1. Offences reported and brought to justice: rape, domestic violence and hate crime

2. Equal treatment by the police and criminal justice system (objective and subjective measures)
3. Deprivation of liberty: numbers and conditions
4. Equal protection and support for individuals with justiciable civil justice problems

## **E. EDUCATION AND LEARNING**

1. Basic skills
2. Educational qualifications
3. Participation in lifelong learning
4. Use of the internet
5. Being treated with respect in education

## **F. STANDARD OF LIVING**

1. Housing quality and security
2. Poverty and security of income
3. Access to care
4. Quality of the local area
5. Being treated with respect by private companies and public agencies in relation to your standard of living

## **G. PRODUCTIVE AND VALUED ACTIVITIES**

1. Employment rate
2. Earnings
3. Occupation

4. Discrimination in employment
5. Unpaid care and free time

## **H. INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIFE**

1. Availability of support
2. Being free from domestic abuse (emotional or financial)
3. Being able to participate in key social and cultural occasions which matter to you
4. Being able to be yourself
5. Being able to form and pursue the relationships you want

## **I. IDENTITY, EXPRESSION AND SELF-RESPECT**

1. Freedom to practice your religion or belief
2. Cultural identity and expression
3. Ability to communicate in the language of your choice
4. Self respect
5. Freedom from stigma

## **J. PARTICIPATION, VOICE AND INFLUENCE**

1. Formal political participation
2. Perceived influence in local area
3. Political activity
4. Taking part in civil organizations
5. Being treated with dignity and respect while accessing and participating in decision-making forums