

Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Chair
Education Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Wednesday 30 September 2020

Dear Chair,

Subject: Recommendation regarding monitoring of apprenticeship participation

I am writing as we have yet to respond to a recommendation directed to the Commission in your 2019 inquiry into Special Educational Needs and Disabilities regarding the monitoring review of apprenticeship participation:

‘We recommend that the Equality and Human Rights Commission conducts a monitoring review of apprenticeship participation by gender, ethnicity and by people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities every three years. Each review should recommend changes to improve Government policy and employer practice.’

Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in this response.

The Commission is required to report to Parliament on progress in relation to equality and human rights. Our most recent progress report, *Is Britain Fairer 2018*, included a specific section on segregation in apprenticeships, which covered gender, disability and race. We also published a research report in 2019, [‘Exploring positive action as a tool to address under-representation in apprenticeships’](#) which included more recent and comprehensive data and analysis on apprenticeships starts by gender, race and disability. Our next *Is Britain*

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Fairer? report is likely to report on differences in apprenticeships by participation. We are unable to guarantee, however, whether we will make specific policy recommendations within that report as we are limiting recommendations to a smaller set of topics, which are yet to be determined on the basis of the evidence.

I would like to take this opportunity to outline our broader work in relation to education. As you may be aware, education is one of the Commission's strategic priorities under our [2019–2022 Strategic Plan](#), with our particular objective being to ensure that schools are truly inclusive places that promote good relations and respect for equality and human rights. Since the outbreak of Coronavirus, we have re-prioritised our work in this area to focus on the equality and human rights impacts of the pandemic, and have recently submitted evidence to your Committee's inquiry into the impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services.

Our particular concerns included reduced local authority support for children's social care services, the impact of the cancellation of exams, the exacerbation of existing educational attainment gaps due to the closures of schools, and the impact of the Government's response on children with SEND. We are in the process of reviewing our work plans with a renewed focus on structural racial inequalities.

I would warmly welcome the opportunity to meet you to discuss these issues and our respective priorities more broadly, should you find that helpful. My office can be contacted via Alix Luddington (Alix.Luddington@equalityhumanrights.com).

Yours sincerely,



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