



Equality Hub

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Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP
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Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 June 2023 regarding Equality Hub staffing levels. Following Spending Review 2021, Cabinet Office Ministers agreed that overall Cabinet Office headcount would need to reduce to levels before the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK's exit from the European Union. As part of these wider reductions, the Equality Hub was asked to reduce its headcount from 170 to 140 by 1 August 2023 and to 135 by 31 March 2024. This is comparable with reductions in headcount across the Department.

To deliver this reduction, the Equality Hub Ministerial team agreed a set of delivery priorities for the Hub and then asked officials to reorganise the Hub so that headcount matched these priorities. This was achieved through an internal Capacity Review with support from Cabinet Office HR and through full, regular, consultation with staff and the Unions over several months.

As you note in your letter, the reductions were applied differently across the Hub to reflect the different resource levels needed to deliver our priorities. The gender team and the Social Mobility Commission had slightly higher levels of reductions, whilst the data and analysis and digital teams increased slightly. I can confirm that no redundancies have been made, nor will be made, as a result of these reductions.

In your letter, you asked about the disbanding of the Tackling Barriers team. This team was focussed on geographic and social economic inequality. These functions have now been transferred to other teams including the Social Mobility Commission, the Race Disparity Unit and the Data and Analysis team. You also asked specifically about the LGBT team, the headcount for this team had reduced in 2021/22 but has been frozen at current levels.

With regards to the Disability Unit, the team has one of the highest headcount levels of any team in the Equality Hub. In addition to their headcount, they also have a pool of people working for them on a 'free loan' basis from across Government. This reflects the cross-cutting nature of their work. This will enable them to support the Minister for Disabled People in delivering the Disability Action Plan.

You also asked about Private Office and Strategy team staffing levels. The reduction of 1 FTE in Private Office reflects that we have 1 less Private Office than before the last reshuffle. The strategy team has now been merged into a new Equalities Delivery Unit to oversee the delivery of my priorities and the headcount has now increased.

Finally, you asked about what happens next in relation to the restructuring and workforce planning. We have now concluded the substantive phases of the Capacity Review process and will achieve our 140 headcount target by 31 July 2023. We have some unfilled vacancies that we are currently recruiting for and hope to fill these this month and next. Once this is done, the restructuring process will formally conclude.

Having been through this comprehensive process, I am confident that the Equality Hub has the staffing levels required to deliver this Government's equality policy priorities.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Kemi Badenoch' in a cursive style.

THE RT HON KEMI BADENOCH MP

Minister for Women & Equalities

Secretary of State for Business & Trade and President of the Board of Trade