



Women and Equalities Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA
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From the Chair

Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Minister for Women and Equalities

By email

29 October 2021

Dear Liz,

Government Equalities Office finances

Part of our Committee's remit is to examine the expenditure and administration of the relevant government department. We would be grateful if you could therefore provide us with answers to the following questions on the GEO's finances:

1. The Government Equalities Office's (GEO) Resource DEL outturn in 2019-20 was £16.7 million as reported in the Cabinet Office 2019-20 Annual Report and Accounts, which was a reduction from the prior year spending of £18.4 million as disclosed in Department for International Development's (DFID) 2018-19 Annual Report and Accounts. The GEO's outturn was not reported in the Cabinet Office 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts. What was the GEO's outturn in 2020-21?
2. The GEO's budget allocations have fallen from £47 million in 2014-15 (per the 2010 Spending Review settlement) to £18 million in 2019-20 (per the GEO Strategy Document for 2019-20). Could you explain why?
3. Can you confirm that the GEO will benefit from the Chancellor's announcement that there will be a real term rise in overall spending for every single department? If so, what will the actual settlement be?
4. In 2018-19, £10.8 million (59%) of GEO's budget was spent on programme or 'front-line' activities. What was the split between admin and programme spending in 2019-20, and 2020-21?
5. Is the GEO's budget separate to other units within the Equality Hub, such as the Race Disparity Unit? If so, what is the budget for the Equality Hub and its constituent parts?
6. What is the budget for 2021-22, and how will this be allocated between administration and programme?
7. Of the administration budget, could you provide a breakdown of staff costs including any contingent labour, temporary staff and consultancy costs?
8. How many staff (full-time equivalent) are permanently employed by the GEO?
9. How many staff have a portfolio which involves carrying out the work of the GEO?



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10. The DfID 2018-19 Annual Report and Accounts noted that the 'assurance on [the GEO's] activities was gained through a combination of the DfE annual assurance framework and direct engagement by DFID officials to gain an overview of the systems and processes in place. Overall, the GEO maintains good corporate governance processes, and is in the process of implementing a number of recommendations to enhance its effectiveness. On 1 April 2019, new arrangements were established for the GEO within the Cabinet Office and its Permanent Secretary assumed accountability for its operations.' How was assurance gained on the GEO's activities in 2019-20 and 2020-21?
11. The GEO had its own Estimate Line in DfID's Annual Report and Accounts which allowed for greater transparency about the office's spending. Does the Cabinet Office intend to provide a similar level of transparency in its future Annual Reports and Accounts?

Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP

Chair, Women and Equalities Committee