

Women and Equalities Select Committee Inquiry

Introduction

1. The new Equality Hub, in the Cabinet Office, brings together the Disability Unit, Government Equalities Office, Race Disparity Unit and, from 1 April, the sponsorship of and secretariat to the Social Mobility Commission.
2. The Government Equalities Office's remit relates to gender equality, LGBT rights and the overall framework of equality legislation for Great Britain. The other units' areas of focus are on cross-Government disability policy and ethnic disparities respectively. The units that make up the Equality Hub work closely together, under a single Director. The Equality Hub reports to Ministers who have other portfolios outside of the Cabinet Office, led by the Minister for Women and Equalities.
3. The Equality Hub has a key role in driving Government priorities on equality and opportunity. The Hub has a particular focus on improving the quality of evidence and data about disparities and the types of barriers different people face, ensuring that fairness is at the heart of everything we do. This includes analysis looking at statutory protected characteristics but also other aspects of inequality, including in particular socio-economic and geographic inequality. The Equality Hub is key to driving progress on the Government's commitment to levelling up opportunity and ensuring fairness for all.

Current Equality Hub activity

4. The Equality Hub is currently working on the following priorities:
 - a. Delivering the Equality Data Programme. This will link HMG datasets in order to understand outcomes across the lifecourse, identify barriers to opportunity, and inform the work of the Hub and wider government. This will consider not only protected characteristics, but wider factors such as socio-economic and geographic inequality.
 - b. Developing a fresh approach to fairness at work to boost transparency, openness and flexibility.
 - c. The preparation, launch and delivery of the National Strategy for Disabled People, working with the Minister for Disabled People. The strategy will take into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people.
 - d. Supporting the Prime Minister's independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.
 - e. Supporting the cross-government Windrush Working Group, specifically the work of its sub-groups relevant to that of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.

Written evidence submitted by The Equality Hub [GEO0041]

- f. Covid-related work, including:
 - i. the ethnicity-focused follow-up project on disparities that the Prime Minister asked the Minister for Equalities to lead;
 - ii. work to build back better, including ensuring women drive and benefit from the recovery.
- g. work on LGBT rights, including:
 - i. working with the FCDO to deliver an international LGBT conference;
 - ii. implementing the gender recognition process improvements; and
 - iii. ending conversion therapy.
- h. supporting the Social Mobility Commission as it joins the Equality Hub, in line with a Machinery of Government decision by the Prime Minister, deepening data and insight into socio-economic inequality.
- i. Internationally, in addition to the LGBT conference, the Hub:
 - i. is helping deliver on the UK's G7 Presidency cross-cutting priority of gender equality;
 - ii. is maximising opportunities in set-piece international events such as the 2021 Paralympics and the annual Commission on the Status of Women; and
 - iii. will lead delivery of UK reports to the UN due soon relating to both the disability and women's rights conventions.

Staffing - FY 20/21

5. The Hub's establishment is 163.5 FTE, with staff in post as at 31 January currently allocated to units as follows.

	FTE in post (Jan 21)
GEO	73
DU	16
RDU	23
Cross-Cutting*	31

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* Some core services work across the Hub including Operations, Communications, Digital, Strategy, Parliamentary Support

Finance

FY 20/21	Budget (£m)		£m
	Admin	Programme	Total
GEO	5.520	11.405	16.925
RDU	0	1.559	1.559
DU	1.034	0.218	1.252
Total	6,554	13,182	19,736

Note - the majority of Cross-Cutting services have been charged to the GEO Admin budget for 20/21.

Governance

6. The Equality Hub completes business planning, workforce transformation, operational delivery and corporate management audits as per the Cabinet Office's governance framework. The Permanent Secretary of the Cabinet Office is the Accounting Officer for the Equality Hub. Quarterly risk returns are shared with the Cabinet Office and the director attends the CO Performance and Risk Committee, with an escalation route to the Cabinet Office's Executive Committee. Due to the unique nature of the Hub's ministerial structure, all high level governance returns are cleared with the Minister for Women and Equalities.

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