

Incoming Gender Equality Duty

The gender equality duty for public bodies will come into force on 6th April 2007. This duty places the legal responsibility on organisations to demonstrate fair treatment of women and men in the delivery of policy and services as well as in their employment. Instead of depending on individuals making complaints about sex discrimination, the duty places the legal responsibility on public authorities to demonstrate that they treat men and women fairly.

Most major public authorities will have to follow a series of steps known as 'specific duties'. This includes setting their own gender equality goals and consulting their service users, customers and employees.

All public authorities, such as health providers, education, local government and the police have to comply. The duty will also apply to charities, voluntary and private sector organisations that are providing a public service. Services provided by organisations under contract, such as community transport, will also be covered by the duty.