

Combating discrimination and promoting equality on the ground of religion

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Starting Points

- Current wisdom...
 - ✓ Integration is a two way process of mutual adaptation
 - ✓ Cultural change cannot be imposed from the outside it grows from within
 - ✓ Diversity is enriching, creative, and fun
- When it comes to religious diversity, current wisdom seems not to apply

Starting Points

- The place of religion in society varies...
 - ✓ A single dominant religion
 - ✓ A multiplicity of religions and a multi-denominational ethos
 - ✓ Secularism as laicism or as neutrality
- The place of religion is subject to contest

Starting Points

- The landscape for religion varies...
 - ✓ A decline in religiosity and a redistribution of strength in numbers
 - ✓ A high level of religiosity with minimal diversity
 - ✓ Low level of religiosity
 - ✓ A high level of religiosity and a growing diversity of religions
 - ✓ Low and decreasing religiosity and minimal diversity of religions
- Freedom of religion vs. Equality of religions

Starting Points

- A growing agenda for those concerned with equality, diversity and discrimination with identified inter-linked drivers...
 - ✓ Hate speech and hate crime
 - ✓ Stereotypes and stereotyping of religious diversity
 - ✓ Government action in legislation or policy
- Issues of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism

Equality Bodies

- Potential of equality bodies
 - ✓ Individual change in the situation and experience of people exposed to discrimination
 - ✓ Institutional change in the practice of employers and service providers and of policy makers and in increased stakeholder activity
 - ✓ Societal change in the value base for equality, diversity and non-discrimination
- Strategic mix of enforcement, promotion of good practice, communication and research

Equality Bodies

- Enforcement
 - ✓ Religious symbols in work, accessing services, and education
 - ✓ Education in relation to access to schools and teaching religion
 - ✓ Employment in relation to recruitment, promotion, and dismissal
 - ✓ Harassment
- Under-reporting, low level of concluded case law

Equality Bodies

- Promotion
 - ✓ Information materials and seminars
 - ✓ Training materials and workshops
 - ✓ Guidance materials
- Stereotypes, lack of stakeholder interest, and lack of data

Equality Bodies

- Communication
 - ✓ Highlighting cases
 - ✓ Participation in public debate
 - ✓ Enabling the voice of religious minorities
 - ✓ Creating opportunities for networking and dialogue
- Lack of engagement with representatives of religious communities and religious organisations

Equality Bodies

- Policy work
- Research
 - ✓ Employers' practice and perspective
 - ✓ Experience of discrimination
 - ✓ Education provision and practice
- Lack of data

Ambition

- Non-discrimination and formal equality – individual and institutional
- Diversity and taking account of diversity
- Equality and achieving full equality in practice

Reasonable Accommodation

- Focus on diversity
 - ✓ Flexibility from employers and service providers
 - ✓ Take account of practical implications of religious diversity
 - ✓ Ensure practice does not turn a person's diversity into a barrier
 - ✓ Eliminate stereotyping

Highest Common Denominator

- Emphasis on similarities rather than differences
- Seek solutions to individual requests for diversity to be accommodated on condition that it benefits all parties

Models of Good Practice

- An example of an equality body strategy
 - ✓ Improve understanding and practice by employers
 - ✓ Create a more balanced and reasonable public dialogue
 - ✓ Assess the existing legal framework

Models of Good Practice

- Employment
 - ✓ Make religious diversity a workplace issue
 - ✓ Provide guidance on managing religious diversity
 - ✓ Act to prevent discrimination
 - ✓ Making workplace adjustments
 - ✓ Action to advance equality on the ground of religion

Models of Good Practice

- Education
 - ✓ Promoting respect
 - ✓ Making adjustment in provision and practice
 - ✓ Action to advance equality on the ground of religion

Conflicts

- Tensions with the grounds of gender, gender identity and sexual orientation
 - ✓ Defending human rights
 - ✓ Hosting dialogue on tensions
 - ✓ Providing guidance on managing conflicting grounds

Conclusion

- A challenging ground
- A ground that has been brought to the forefront of equality concerns
- Gear up and take on this challenge
 - ✓ Part of a broader concern for equality
 - ✓ An issue meriting a focus in its own right
 - ✓ Ambition for equality