

***Response to the Equality Act
2010: Public Sector Equality Duty
Consultation***

***Christian Concern
&
The Christian Legal Centre***

November 2010



Consultation

Equality Act 2010: The Public Sector Equality Duty: Promoting equality through transparency

Closing date: 10 November 2010

E-mail response to: specificduties@geo.gsi.gov.uk

About Us

Christian Concern is a policy and legal resource centre that identifies changes in policy and law that may affect the Judeo-Christian heritage of this nation. The team of lawyers and advisers at Christian Concern conduct research into, and campaign on, legislation and policy changes that may affect Christian freedoms or the moral values of the UK. Christian Concern reaches a mailing list of 25,000 supporters. <http://www.christianconcern.com>

Christian Concern is linked to a sister and separate organisation, the Christian Legal Centre, which takes up cases affecting Christian freedoms. <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com>

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Introductory Comments

Christian Concern takes some comfort from the Coalition Government's statement that it has developed a new approach to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in line with its guiding principles of freedom, fairness and responsibility. However, the Equality Act 2010 (the "Act") remains an instrument of the previous Government. While the PSED may appear to have laudable aims, Christian Concern remains very concerned that the PSED will be implemented in a way that continues the aggressive advancement of an 'equality agenda', lobbied for by special interest groups, who aim to impose a particular ideology on the public, and which restricts the freedoms of those with a religion or belief, causing problems for individuals of religious faith and faith based organisations. The effects of existing equality legislation have often been restrictive and negative and the introduction of the PSED could continue this trend. Please see our response to Question 12 where we have listed many cases that should be noted before the PSED is brought into force in April.

The Coalition Government has the chance to implement a fairer system, maintaining the freedom of individuals to hold and act upon their beliefs without being discriminated against. Nobody should be obliged to promote other religions or particular sexual orientations contrary to their own beliefs or ethos.

Our responses should be read in the light of this underlying concern.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY Promoting equality through transparency – A consultation

Question 1: Do you have any comments on our proposals for data reporting? Does the drafting of regulation 2 accurately reflect the aims of the policy described in paragraph 5.2 to 5.9?

Does the drafting of regulation 2 accurately reflect the aims of the policy?

Please place a cross in the appropriate box

Yes No Not sure

Please explain:

Response to Question 1

The impact of data collection and its likely bias

A key concern is that the process of collecting and reporting data will result in the asking of intrusive questions to members of the public and employees of public bodies which they may not wish to answer. In particular, we are concerned about questions which relate to an individual's sexual orientation or religious belief. We are also concerned that the responses to those questions may result in a subsequent removal of public funding from organisations that may be deemed, through whatever criteria or prejudice, to not be 'promoting equality'.

A recent example of this relates to the elderly residents of the (Christian) Pilgrim Care Home in Brighton. The elderly residents found that a request from Brighton and Hove Council in December 2008 to each complete a form indicating whether they were lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual or unsure was "intrusive" and "inappropriate" and refused to fill in the forms. As a result the Council decided to cut the £13,000 funding it provided to them and only agreed to restore their funding after Pilgrim Homes launched a legal action for religious discrimination.¹

This is but one example of a case of recipients of public funding being penalised due to the 'equality agenda', which is in reality a particular ideology promoted by the previous Government on behalf of vocal, minority campaign groups. This ideology has not been subscribed to by the majority of the general public but is being imposed upon them. The

¹ See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1102206/Home-retired-missionaries-loses-grant--wont-ask-residents-lesbians.html> and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/4548761/Christian-care-home-victorious-in-gay-dispute.html>

care home was penalised when the Council considered that they were not doing all they could to make its services open to a group with a protected characteristic. The collection of data was treated by the public body concerned as a tool to assess the extent to which the care home was open to the homosexual community. We question this conclusion, and we query how equalities data will be interpreted in the future by public bodies, especially if interpreted through a particular ideological lens. The care home's position was that: "We have every reason to believe that we have given places to gay Christians, and no questions were ever asked".

Christian Concern is concerned that the data collection exercise resulting from the implementation of the PSED in April is likely to lead to many more cases similar to that of the Brighton Pilgrim Care Home.

The result of the introduction of a secular 'equality agenda' may also be that those who believe that they may benefit from that agenda, because they share one or more protected characteristic, are much more likely to reveal personal details than those who do not share any of the protected characteristics. Those within the latter group may well be more reluctant to provide data, especially if they consider that they may be penalised as a result. Consequently the data collected may not accurately reflect the true needs of all of the groups being surveyed and, in particular, may be biased towards the needs of those sharing a relevant protected characteristic.

The PSED, as well as the Act as a whole, has failed to provide an answer where there is a clash between protected characteristics. Although both religious belief and homosexuality are protected to some extent under existing equality law, these two strands are often incompatible with one another. The law is unbalanced in this area, first within the legislation and then worsened in judicial interpretation, favouring the protection of sexual orientation over the protection of religious belief. This has led to Christians losing their jobs after refusing to compromise their beliefs at work and Christians being stopped from being foster parents. For many examples of this, please see our answer to Question 12.

Regarding public sector employees, please see our response to Question 2.

The need for data to be aggregated and anonymised (Consultation para 5.3)

Another key concern relates to the need for data collected pursuant to the PSED (especially if it relates to sensitive areas such as sexual orientation or religion or belief) to be aggregated and anonymised. This requirement is set out in the description of the proposals at paragraph 5.3 of the Consultation (fourth bullet point at page 15). That paragraph refers to the Draft Public Data Principles being prepared by the Public Sector Transparency Board (set out at Annex 3).

The Transparency Board's Draft Public Data Principles at Annex 3 include all of the other principles set out in the bullet points at paragraph 5.3 (page 15) of the Consultation but nowhere include reference of the need for the data to be aggregated and anonymised before publication.

In addition, there is no reference in the draft Regulations at Annex 2 to the fact that the data will be collected and published in accordance with the Transparency Board's Public Data Principles, let alone to the fact that the data should be aggregated and anonymised.

In order that people feel confidence in revealing sensitive personal information, such as their religion or belief or sexual orientation, it is *essential* that it be made clear in the relevant documentation (ideally in the Regulations themselves but, if not, then in the Transparency Board's Public Data Principles, reference to which should be made in the Regulations) that the data published pursuant to the PSED will be aggregated and anonymised.

The role of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Consultation para 5.5)

We remain concerned that, while the Consultation stresses in many places the advantages to public bodies in being free from interference by Westminster and Whitehall while implementing the PSED, those public bodies will instead be guided in implementing the PSED by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

While Westminster at least remains accountable to the public, the EHRC appears to be accountable to no-one. The EHRC has been and remains to this date the most vociferous advocate of the secular 'equality agenda'. We have great concern that it will be left to the EHRC to "set out the standard requirements for the equality data to be published by different types of public bodies in its statutory Code of Practice and guidance on the Equality Duty". The draft Regulations themselves set no limits whatsoever on the amount of data that is to be collected and published and local Councils in particular will feel obliged to follow whatever guidance the EHRC provides them with, in order to avoid any risk of enforcement proceedings being brought against them.

In its May 2010 consultation on six Draft Non-Statutory Guidance documents, the EHRC in several places referred incorrectly to a public body's duty to "promote equality" instead of the correct duty under Article 149(1)(b) of the Act which is to "advance equality of opportunity". We are most concerned at the use of the phrase "promote equality" or "advance equality" as we consider the normal meaning of these words to encompass requiring a public body, in its capacity as employer, to ask employees to promote other religions or beliefs or particular sexual orientations contrary to their consciences.

Concern about the aims of the PSED as set out in the Consultation (paras 5.7-5.9 and elsewhere)

Christian Concern is also concerned to see that the phrase "promote equality" or "advance equality" (as opposed to "advance equality of opportunity") appears several times in the PSED Consultation, for example para 5.9, para 5.13, Annex 6 at page 44 and Annex 7 at pages 63 and 66.

It is essential that public bodies understand that, while they will be required under the draft Regulation 2(b) to publish assessments of the impact of their policies and proposed policies on their obligations to further the aims of the PSED, those aims incorporate "advancing equality of opportunity" between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it, as opposed to promoting those who share a particular protected characteristic as being of equal (or greater) value than those who have no such protected characteristic or a protected characteristic (such as a religious belief) which does not adhere to the secular 'equality agenda'. It is "advancing equality of opportunity" that should be born in mind when public bodies maintain their obligations under the PSED and this needs to be emphasised.

Some positive aspects of data publication (Consultation para 5.7)

Christian Concern can see some benefits in transparency which will enable members of the public to see the information which public bodies take into account when assessing the impact and likely impact of their policies resulting from their obligations under the PSED. We hope that this will enable third parties, such as Christian Concern and other community groups who act on behalf of the “silent majority”, to campaign against some of the policies which public bodies are introducing, at taxpayers’ expense, in order to further the secular ‘equality agenda’. In particular it will be of interest to groups such as Christian Concern that public bodies have to be open about how they have engaged with equality campaigners and other interest groups who set out to further the aims set out in the PSED (draft Regulation 2(d)).

Question 2: Do you have any comments on our proposals for employment reporting? Does the drafting of regulation 2 accurately reflect the aims of the policy described in paragraphs 5.10 to 5.11?

Does the drafting of regulation 2 accurately reflect the aims of the policy?

Please place a cross in the appropriate box

Yes No Not sure

Please explain:

Our concerns about employment reporting are similar to those set out in response to Question 1, namely:

- i) The questions asked may be intrusive and public sector employees may well not wish to answer them, in particular in the absence of any guarantee of anonymity (see our response to Question 12);
- ii) The Government is leaving it to the EHRC to provide guidance as to what workforce equality data should be published. There is a tension in the Consultation between the statements (at Consultation paras 5.8 and Annex 7, para 13) that “If a public body does not have the data which is needed to give the full picture [of equality in the workplace] then we would expect them to take reasonable steps to fill that gap” and the statements (at Consultation 5.11 and Annex 7, para 13) that “This requirement should not be interpreted as a requirement on public bodies to routinely collect data on sensitive personnel [personal in Annex 7] issues, such as the religion or sexual orientation of their employees”. The statement at para 5.11 that “it is encouraging that it is becoming more common for public sector employees to agree to their employers seeking ...[personal] information [about matters such as their sexual orientation or religion or belief]” indicates the trend that the Government hopes will be set. We expect the EHRC to encourage public bodies to obtain as much information as possible and to encourage the approach taken by Brighton and Hove Council in the Pilgrim Care Home case – i.e. to assume that a refusal to answer the questions indicates a refusal to cooperate with the aims of ‘equality’, with a resultant withdrawal of funding.

In addition, we are concerned about the impact of the employment reporting requirements on the huge number of educational establishments (over 20,000) where the teachers and other staff are employees of the local educational authorities. These bodies will be caught by the reporting requirements as the total number of employees of the relevant local authority will be several thousand, even though the staff of the schools concerned will generally be well below 150. We consider that the reporting requirements in these cases will put a disproportionate burden on the head teachers and administrative staff of the schools concerned.

Question 3: Do you have any comments on our proposals for transparency in public service provision? Does the drafting of regulation 2 accurately reflect the aims of the policy described in paragraphs 5.12 to 5.14?

Does the drafting of regulation 2 accurately reflect the aims of the policy?

Please place a cross in the appropriate box

Yes No Not sure

Please explain:

We presume that transparency within public service provision will fall within Regulation 2(b) and/or Regulation 2(c) although it is not specifically mentioned within the draft text of either.

Our greatest concern is that the PSED will be applied to public service provision in such a way as to prevent individuals of religious faith and faith based organisations from supplying services to public bodies, and services to the public on behalf of public bodies.

Churches are the largest, most active community groups in any city, town or village in helping to meet the needs of the local community, and they are ideally placed to provide publicly funded services. The aggressive implementation of equality legislation has created barriers to churches receiving local government funding in order to serve their communities, with detrimental results.

The most obvious example of this concerns the adoption of children. There are currently 4,000 children in Britain on waiting lists for adoption². This has been exacerbated due to the fact that many Roman Catholic adoption agencies have closed since the passing of equality legislation which requires all such agencies to consider homosexual and unmarried couples as possible adopters. These adoption agencies have had to close in order to not violate their religious beliefs. As a result, children have lost out on being adopted into loving homes. This was unnecessary – as homosexual and unmarried couples are able to adopt children through the numerous secular agencies run by the local authorities. Here we see equality legislation actually reducing diversity, reducing the number of children adopted and discriminating against organisations with a religious belief, forcing them to either close or change their beliefs. No notice is taken of the body of evidence that suggests that children are better off in stable families with a mother and a father. Here, ideology has been promoted above freedom of belief, common sense and the best interests of children.

Phrases such as “judge effectively how [public bodies] are eliminating discrimination, advancing equality [sic] and fostering good relations through the services they provide, commission and procure” (Consultation para 5.13) are likely to result in further barriers to Christian organisations fully participating in and serving society. This does not seem to fit with the Government’s vision for a ‘Big Society’. The Communities Secretary stated recently

² See New Equality laws blamed for declining adoption rate, Daily Telegraph, 5 November 2010

that Christianity should not be sidelined³ and we hope that this will be the position taken by the Coalition Government as a whole in relation to the PSED.

³ See <http://christianconcern.com/our-concerns/religious-freedom/christians-must-not-be-sidelined-says-communities-secretary>, 5 July 2010, with link to interview in Sunday Express

Question 4: Do you have any comments on our proposals for setting equality objectives to achieve transparency about impact on equality? Does the drafting of regulation 3 accurately reflect the aims of the policy described in paragraphs 5.15 and 5.16?

Does the drafting of regulation 3 accurately reflect the aims of the policy?

Please place a cross in the appropriate box

Yes No Not sure

Please explain:

For the reasons set out in our response to the earlier questions, we are concerned that the setting of any such “equality objectives” will result in greater barriers to the active participation by Christian groups in society.

For the reasons set out in the last paragraph of our response to Question 1, we look forward to greater transparency which will enable groups such as Christian Concern to have a better understanding of the thought processes by which such objectives are devised, so that we may challenge such objectives if we consider that they will have detrimental results to those in need in society whom Christian groups are keen to serve.

When the Consultation states (para 5.16) that “*the public* will be able to look at this information alongside a wider set of data to judge whether public bodies are focusing on the right ideas”, the reality is that those most likely to look at the information are “community groups and equality campaigners” (see Consultation para 5.3). It is important that representatives of all sections of society should have a chance to assess the “equality outcomes” that the public bodies are going to work towards.

Question 5: Do you have any comments on the changes proposed in Chapter 5 under the section ‘Reducing the burdens on public organisations?’

Please place a cross in the appropriate box

Yes No

Comments:

We completely agree that “public bodies should be free from the central diktats that so often skew priorities, divert resources and hinder the ability to react more rationally to local needs” (Consultation para 5.19). However we are greatly concerned that, while the Coalition Government proposes to cut out Whitehall interference (in the form of top-down targets and national equality priorities), these will be replaced by increased guidance from the EHRC (see our response to Questions 1 and 2 above).

We completely agree with the aim of reducing the burdens on public organisations. When we view the figures set out in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (Annex 6) we are astonished at the cost of complying with the three existing equality duties in relation to race, disability and sex and can only hope that the assessment of the costs of complying with the PSED are as little as the estimates set out in Annex 6 (page 45), given that public bodies have to implement the PSED in relation to the additional areas of age, gender reassignment, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Even given that the estimates of the costs of the PSED are significantly less than the costs of the three existing duties, those costs are still extremely high (some £236 million, between £23 and £30 million a year upon the public sector).

We would ask the Coalition Government to note that these costs estimates (at page 45) do not take into account the likely real cost of the PSED (more Christian businesses and organisations closing and their clients/customers left without help). Nor is it correct to state (as at page 45) that “the private sector will bear no costs, either one-off or recurring”. Firstly, there are a large number of private sector organisations that will be covered by the PSED by virtue of carrying out public functions (see Consultation para 7.3). Those private sector organisations will have to incur PSED costs to the extent that they carry out public functions. Secondly, it is clear that, while the PSED applies only to the public sector and public functions, the Government’s aim (at least the aim of the previous Government which remains clear in the paperwork) is that the norms established in the public sector should later take effect in the private. See the statement in the box “What are the policy objectives and the intended effects?” in Annex 6 at the foot of page 43, as follows: “Encourage public bodies to lead by example, to promote behavioural change in the private and third sectors (which are not covered by the duty)” and in Annex 6 at page 52: “One of the roles of the duty is to create a social norm – to shape expectations as to the way in which things should be done – to encourage behavioural change in the private and third sectors”.

Question 6: Do you have any comments on our proposals for transition from the existing duties relating to race, disability and gender to the new public sector Equality Duty, as described in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2?

Please place a cross in the appropriate box

Yes No

Comments:

Our concern here relates to the role of the EHRC which will produce practical guidance 12 weeks before the PSED comes into force explaining the requirements of the general and specific details in more detail and setting out what the different types and sizes of public bodies need to do to comply (para 6.3). See our response to Question 1 above regarding the general role of the EHRC.

Given that the draft regulations contain only the bare bones of the specific duties, the EHRC has been given an enormous scope for requiring significant details of information to be produced. By contrast, public bodies and other interested parties are given very little chance to challenge the guidance provided by the EHRC before the public bodies need to start implementing the PSED and, in particular, publishing the information required to be published by 4 April 2011.

Question 7: We would welcome your views on the proposed list of public bodies for Part 1 and Part 4 of Schedule 19, as described in paragraphs 7.7 to 7.12?

Comments:

We have no specific comments regarding individual organisations included or not included in Schedule 19. We agree that it is helpful for it to be made clear to everyone whether a particular public body is subject to the PSED and what specific duties are imposed under the PSED.

Our greater concern is with the myriad of **private sector and voluntary sector organisations** which cannot be listed in Schedule 19 but who will be subject to the PSED to the extent that they are carrying out public functions. We are concerned that implementing the PSED will put enormous burdens upon such organisations, in particular if they are small, as many are.

We would be grateful if the Government could confirm what appears to us to be the case; namely that, while such private and voluntary sector organisations are obliged to have due regard to the matters comprising the PSED while exercising their public functions (see subsection 149(2) of the Act), they are not subject to any of the specific duties listed in the draft Regulations set out at Annex 2. This must be the case since section 153(1) of the Act refers to a Minister of the Crown imposing duties by regulations “on a public authority” and section 155 likewise refers simply to a “public authority”.

Question 8: We would welcome your views on the bodies that we do and do not think should be subject to the specific duties, as described in paragraphs 7.13 and 7.14

Comments:

Schools and further and higher educational establishments make up the bulk of those due to be affected by the PSED. However, the governing bodies of educational establishments maintained by local authorities (and indeed of further and higher education establishments) are usually small organisations, for whom even 3 days drawing up and planning equality objectives and five half day assessments (see Annex 6, page 59) would take out a large chunk of staff time. Most schools do not have an equality officer or personnel manager and their administrative staff is stretched carrying out day to day tasks. So, unless the proposal is for an equality officer and/or personnel manager to be provided by the relevant local authority (and the relevant funding for this guaranteed by central government), the drawing up of such objectives would fall on the already stretched head teachers.

We would ask that small schools (and further and higher education establishments) be excused from the requirements of the specific duties, in the same way that parish meetings and some professional and regulatory bodies have been excused. That would be consistent with the statement at Consultation, para 7.13 that “Th[e] complete list will comprise *key public sector bodies* that have an important role to play in furthering the delivery of equalities outcomes and are *of a sufficient size to carry out the specific duties*” (emphasis added).

Question 9: Do you have any other comments on the drafting of the Statutory Instrument? If yes, please explain.

Please place a cross in the appropriate box

Yes No

Comments:

To summarise:

The drafting of the Statutory Instrument is of a minimalist nature and leaves too many gaps to be filled in by guidance from the EHRC (see responses to Questions 1, 2, 5 & 6 above).

The Statutory Instrument makes no mention of the need for the data to be aggregated and anonymised and to be produced in accordance with the Public Data Principles being prepared by the Transparency Board (see response to Question 1 above).

Question 10: Do you have any evidence or data that you can provide or direct us to which would help us to develop our regulatory impact assessment?

Please place a cross in the appropriate box

Yes No

Comments:

See response to Question 12 below.

Question 11: Are you aware of any other benefits resulting from the proposal that have not already been described in the consultation document or the regulatory impact assessment?

Please place a cross in the appropriate box

Yes No

If yes, please explain:

See response to Question 12 below.

Question 12: Are there any other comments you would like to make in relation to this consultation that have not already been covered by this form? If yes, please explain.

Please place a cross in the appropriate box

Yes No

Comments:

Please find set out below:

- (a) Some general comments in respect to our concern about the impact of **equality legislation such as the PSED**; and
- (b) Some examples of the resultant **unfair treatment of Christians and Christian organisations**.

A. Equality Legislation

We would urge the Coalition Government to take the following comments into account when considering the extent to which the PSED should be implemented.

Divisive and misconceived

Society benefits where people have shared values. Equality legislation, such as the Act, tends to pull in the opposite direction by encouraging people to concentrate on what makes them different and to see this as a source of grievance to be righted by the courts. Equality legislation is divisive and encourages us to split into groupings centred around which equality strand we identify with, or not as the case may be.

Equality legislation in its various guises has spawned an entire industry. This is increasingly part of the problem rather than the solution. Inevitably, the interests of bodies such as the EHRC lie in playing up differences and accentuating abuses, for this is how they justify their existence. In doing so, they heighten consciousness of difference and feed a victim mentality on the part of some minority groups.

Bodies such as the EHRC are unelected quangos that cost millions in terms of staffing and associated costs. They also impose a hidden cost on society by reason of the negative effects described above and the administrative burden placed on government and industry through the need to comply with unnecessary laws and regulations. These are precisely the kind of bodies, laws and regulations that the Coalition Government says that it wants to get rid of.

Costly and complex

Equality legislation has created a situation where there is confusion over which right, or which 'protected characteristic', is more important than the other. Currently the courts seem to be favouring sexual orientation over religion or belief (see below for many

examples). The cost of the resulting legal proceedings and compliance with court rulings is immense. It has also resulted in a significant erosion of civil liberties. UK law already contains appropriate protections for religious belief and sexual orientation.

No government that wishes to create a 'Big Society', increase freedom, reward personal responsibility or reduce waste in administration ought to support legislation such as the PSED which runs totally counter to all of these objectives.

Allowing undue influence to lobby groups

It is right and proper that the government should canvass views from all sectors of society in order to inform policy. In doing so, however, the government must beware of allowing minority views undue influence. Much of the drive behind equality legislation appears to have come from lobby groups that are a minority within a minority. Their views should be weighted accordingly.

B. Unfair Treatment of Christians and Christian organisations

Equality legislation has already hampered the ability of Christian organisations to fully participate in and serve society and has created barriers for Christians who work for or try to obtain funding from public bodies.

The following examples highlight the growing trend which we fear will be encouraged by implementation of the PSED:

Local Government

- A Christian Homelessness Prevention Officer for Wandsworth Council was sacked for mentioning God in the workplace.⁴
- A religious printer lost regular contracts with his council because he did not want to print material to promote an LGB event hosted by the council as it was against his conscience.⁵
- A local authority wanted to withdraw a grant from an elderly Christian home because the elderly residents did not wish to answer sexual orientation questionnaires⁶ (referred to in more detail in response to Question 1 above).

⁴ See <http://www.justiceforduke.com/>

⁵ See **Religion and Sexual Orientation: how to manage relations in the workplace page 20-** The Stonewall guide provides an illustration of a printer who was a supplier for a council but did not wish to print materials for an event for the lesbian, gay and bisexual community. In the words of the guide "The supplier refused to produce the materials on the grounds that they objected to the message targeted at lesbian, gay and bisexual people because it was against their religion.... The council made the decision, in line with their policies, that the entire council contract with that company would be withdrawn and no further business would be given to the supplier."

The Stonewall guidance can be downloaded from this link:

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace/1473.asp#religion>

⁶ See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1102206/Home-retired-missionaries-loses-grant--wont-ask-residents-lesbians.html> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/4548761/Christian-care-home-victorious-in-gay-dispute.html>

- LGB local authority staff wanted to use a building associated with a Catholic Church and were asked to leave. As a result of this incident, the local council decided to no longer use venues owned by the Catholic Church, which had a significant financial impact on them.⁷
- Haringey Council in London threatened a local family centre with the withdrawal of vital funds unless it agreed to renounce all expression of Christianity including singing songs about Jesus from the voluntary services it provided.⁸
- The former Government's Communities Secretary John Denham admitted that some local government bodies had shown "reluctance" in commissioning services from faith-based groups and that faith groups had been disadvantaged when it came to accessing funding.⁹
- Christian groups were told by the former Government's Communities Secretary Hazel Blears that Christian groups should only be able to access funding for social work if they promise not to evangelise.¹⁰ Christian groups should not be asked to leave their faith behind to access public monies as much of their community work is motivated by faith.
- The former Government's Communities and Local Government department draft single public equality scheme 2010 – 2013 mentions 3 Muslim projects under 'community cohesion' but no Christianity projects.¹¹

Hospitals

- A Christian nurse has been demoted and transferred off the ward for wearing a cross she has worn for nearly 30 years.¹²
- A Christian nurse faced the sack for offering to pray for a sick patient.¹³
- A Christian nurse with 40 years experience was sacked for suggesting a patient "go to church" to relieve stress in a training course.¹⁴

Schools/Education

⁷ See Stonewall- Religion and Sexual Orientation: how to manage relations in the workplace page 21
The Stonewall guidance can be downloaded from this link:

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace/1473.asp#religion>

⁸ See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-419992/Childrens-group-threatened-closure-religious-songs.html>

⁹ See <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.called.to.challenge.political.candidates.on.funding/25569.htm>

¹⁰ See <http://www.eauk.org/articles/debt-care.cfm>

¹¹ See http://www.ccfon.org/docs/CCFON_&_CLC_Response_to_the_CLG_Dept_Single_Equality_Scheme_Consultation_2010_to_2013.pdf

¹² See <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=1046>

¹³ See <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=680>

<http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=684>

¹⁴ See <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=746>

- A Christian school receptionist was threatened with dismissal after she sent an email to friends from her church asking them to pray for her daughter who had been told off in school for talking about Jesus.¹⁵
- A Christian supply teacher was dismissed for sharing her faith with a pupil.¹⁶
- A Christian Teacher faced the sack for expressing Christian beliefs on homosexual practice to colleagues.¹⁷
- A Christian schoolgirl in Derby was sent home after she refused to remove her crucifix necklace.¹⁸

Christian Businesses/Charities

- A Christian charity was reported to be considering dropping the word ‘church’ from its name because it creates “unnecessary barriers” to receiving public funding. The Scottish-based Churches Action for the Homeless (CATH) was worried that its perceived religious identity would make it more difficult to access grants. Trustees asked the charity’s supporters to help come up with a new name for the organisation which would be “fully inclusive”.¹⁹
- Religious charities, the single largest part of the voluntary sector, find it increasingly difficult to get public funding for their activities.²⁰
- In April 2010 the Salvation Army called upon the new government to safeguard faith based service delivery.²¹
- Concerns on prejudice in funding faith based organisations have lead the former Communities and Local Government Department to produce a publication in March 2010 entitled *Ensuring a level playing field: Funding faith-based organisations to provide publicly funded services*.²² Any efforts here could be destroyed by implementation of the PSED.

Marginalising of Christianity and the favouring of Muslims²³

¹⁵ See <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=689>

¹⁶ See <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=970>

¹⁷ See <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=790>

¹⁸ See <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/article771162.ece>

¹⁹ See <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/charity.considers.dropping.church.from.title.for.public.funding/23966.htm>

²⁰ See <http://www.newsoftheworld.co.uk/columnists/653139/Former-Archbishop-of-Canterbury-George-Carey-writes-column-for-News-of-the-World.html>

²¹ See http://www1.salvationarmy.org.uk/uki/www_uki.nsf/vw-news/A215E3E206843BAF8025770400310444?opendocument

²² See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/ensuringalevel>
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/15073411.pdf>

²³ See <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christians.warned.of.increasing.marginalisation.in.the.uk/25834.htm>

- Muslim groups in Scotland have been awarded more 'equality' funding than all other religious groups put together. The Equality Unit gave Muslim groups £1.5 million of public money, compared with £137,500 given to Christian charities and £110,000 given to Jewish organisations.²⁴
- The Church of England accused the previous Government of favoring Muslims in funding. Parishes are being starved of state funds to help the poor as a result of money being diverted to other faiths; senior clergy have previously told the General Synod.²⁵
- A foster carer was struck off the carer list for Gateshead Council for allowing a Muslim girl in her care to convert to Christianity and has been reinstated 2 years later.²⁶
- The National Association of Muslim Police (NAMP) received £90,000 in grant aid from the Home Office in the last two years while the Christian Police Association (CPA) received just £15,000 in the last five, despite both groups having around 2,000 members.²⁷

²⁴ See <http://scottishchristian.com/church-says-government-has-muslim-funding-bias/>

²⁵ See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/5803962/Church-accuses-Government-of-favouring-Muslims.html>

²⁶ See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/religion/4557618/Christian-foster-mother-struck-off-after-Muslim-girl-converts.html>
<http://www.ccfon.org/view.php?id=1135>

²⁷ See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/7430802/Row-over-funding-for-police-faith-groups.html>