

KEY POINT BRIEFING

Age Equality

Policy Priorities and Recommendations

We recommend that government, officials and key stakeholders act to address the following policy priorities:

LAW REFORM: Protect people of all ages from unjustified age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services.

Comprehensive legislation should be introduced to give protection to people of all ages, including children and young people, against unjustifiable direct and indirect discrimination, as well as harassment and victimisation. The legislation should permit lawful positive action; should include exceptions which are narrowly construed and objectively justified; and should grant the Commission a range of general duties and powers, including enforcement powers. We also reiterate our call for reform of the Commission's powers in relation to the age employment legislation.

HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING: Meet the specific needs of older and younger people across a range of equality groups.

Action for younger people should include the provision of adequate age appropriate mental health support services; transition services from child to adult services; and support for young trans people. For older people, action should include the provision of effective care in the community; raising awareness and uptake of the use of assistive technologies; and meeting the specific needs of older LGB and trans people in domiciliary, residential and nursing care.

EMPLOYMENT: Reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET; reduce long-term unemployment amongst older people.

Targeted action is required, particularly for those who may face additional barriers due to Section 75 identities. Mentoring, targeted careers advice and wider support for those at, or approaching, school leaving age could help match career aspirations and skills to job prospects. Co-ordinated action is needed to tackle perceived and actual barriers facing older people in returning to, and remaining in, work – including with regards to stereotypes; life-long learning and education; training and development opportunities; and pathways to work.

EDUCATION: Improve the participation of older people; young carers; looked after children; and those within the juvenile justice centre.

Actions should tackle barriers to older people participating in life-long and further education; ensure collaboration between Departments to identify young carers and provide services to both support them and improve their educational outcomes; provide tailored support to ensure the effective participation in education of every looked after child; and ensure that children and young people in the juvenile justice centre have access to an appropriate education curriculum.

HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION: Across all tenures, ensure accessible accommodation, energy efficiency, and access to a comprehensive fuel-brokering scheme.

We recommend the application of the Lifetime Homes Standard and wheelchair housing design standard to all new builds across all tenures; provision of easy to access adaptation services; sufficient capacity to provide care and support for care home residents; and research to better understand the accommodation requirements of older people. Action is also required to further advance energy efficiency and to implement a fuel-brokering scheme to secure competitive rates across all tenures.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE: Ensure the active participation of younger and older people; address over-arching barriers.

Action is required to encourage younger people to apply for public appointments; and for public authorities to more effectively and meaningfully engage with and foster the active participation of people of all ages in public policy development and decision making, including to tackle over-arching structural and personal barriers to active participation.

PREJUDICE AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES: Challenge age-based negative and prejudicial attitudes, addressing their impact on individuals.

We recommend further exploration of how prejudicial attitudes impact on older people's health and lifestyle choices; training for police incorporating challenging negative and prejudicial attitudes towards children and young people; and promoting children and young people's positive contribution to society. The fear of crime among older people should be addressed.

WELFARE AND SOCIAL PROTECTION: Further mitigate equality impacts of Welfare Reform; address the number of looked after children within the criminal justice system.

Action is needed to assess the impact of Universal Credit on low income mixed age couples; ensure that the withdrawal of housing benefit to unemployed 18-21 year olds does not result in a rise in youth homelessness; address the needs of single tenants aged 35 years and under when renting in the private rented sector. Action is also required to reduce the number of looked after children subject to Police and Criminal Evidence Order (PACE) detentions, and to address their overrepresentation within the criminal justice system.