

WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH ME?

*10 reasons why you need to keep your
local services on their toes...*



'EQUALITY?' 'DIVERSITY?' WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH ME?

You might be a man. Or a woman. You could be old or young. Gay or straight. You have a race and maybe a religion. You might be disabled. Or transgender. We're all different. We need different things.

You pay for hospitals, schools, all public services and they have to treat you fairly, with respect and deliver services you need.

'Equality' and 'diversity' are terms that basically mean we should all get the right services, whoever we are.

It's not about special treatment, it's about the right treatment for everyone. And you can help make sure it happens.

It's what this booklet is here to help you do.

2 YOU'RE THE EYES AND THE EARS. MAYBE THE MOUTH.

The people running schools and hospitals and other public services might not understand why equality is important, even though there's a new law there to remind them. This is where you come in.

You use those services. You pay for them too! And you are able to see where they're going right and where they're going wrong.

Learn to spot the key signs that they're going wrong. And learn how to tell them. Otherwise, how can they get better?

3 CAN WE HAVE THAT IN WRITING?

The first thing to check on is a statement. An equality and diversity statement, to be precise.

It should be short, to the point and easy to find. It'll say something like, 'We treat everyone equally and we don't discriminate on the grounds of...' then it should list gender, gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age. If your school or hospital or local council or whatever doesn't have one, ask why not.

After all, it's an easy way for them to prove they're doing something.

4 NOT YOU AGAIN!

The next thing to look for are the faces on the posters. Do you ever see yourself or your family? Or someone like you? Same race? Same faith? Same age? If not, why not?

Having a face on a poster or leaflet that 'represents' you makes it more likely you'll read it. We're not saying EVERY poster, but you need to see yourself sometimes. If they haven't worked that one out, what else are they missing?

If they don't represent everyone – including you! - ask why not.

5 IS THERE A TRAINED PROFESSIONAL IN THE HOUSE?

Next on your checklist of things to look out for is how people are being treated. That will give you an idea about staff training.

If a doctor doesn't open a door for someone in a wheelchair, she needs training. If a policeman demands to search a woman, he needs training. People who haven't been trained get things wrong.

If you spot anything that makes you wonder about diversity training, it's OK to ask: 'What sort of diversity training do you have here?' See! Easy!

6 LISTENING BETWEEN THE LINES.

If staff are up to scratch on equality, they will ask things in a way that doesn't make you feel uncomfortable. Look out for situations where they DO make you feel uncomfortable, and that could be a clue.

Do they assume you are married? Do they assume the woman at a parents' meeting is a friend and not your partner? Do they assume you can read small print?

It's important to be able to talk honestly about who we are and what we need. If they are making false assumptions, that can stand in the way. It's easy. For example 'Who is in your family?' rather than 'Is this your husband?' makes life easier for everyone.



7 WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH YOU?

Another thing to have your eye on is whether they are trying to find out about people in the area. One way they do this is through forms.

It's understandable to get suspicious when people want to know your details – how old you are, whether you're heterosexual or gay, what your ethnic background is – but there's no need to be worried.

There are strict laws to protect your information and forms are a good sign that they are trying to understand the local community. Look out for them, make sure they include everything and fill them in.



THIS WEEK WE'RE GOING TO BE NICE TO...

Some public services only think about one group of people at a time. So, they might make sure signs are in different languages but not provide them in braille. They may only provide baby changing facilities in the women's toilets. Or they may celebrate Black History Month but ignore Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans History Month. That's not really on.

If your doctor has thought about her Asian patients (and done all the things in this booklet to show she has) she should be thinking about her disabled patients too...

We're all equal after all.



You and your schools, hospitals and public services should be working as partners.

They should be looking forward to getting your emails, texts, tweets, Facebook comments... even letters and phone calls.

They need to make it easy for you to contact them to help them get things right, however you want to do it. Especially when it comes to equality.

Take the time to tell them how they're doing. Good news and bad!

10 ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Obviously, the most important thing to look out for is how you're treated. If you think you're getting a rubbish service because you're black or old or gay or disabled, then you need to let them know about it.

The new law means public bodies have to take your complaint seriously and let you know what they've done as a result. If you don't complain, then the next person might get an even worse service.

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Stonewall



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