



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Equal Opportunities Committee

‘Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities’ - how is it going?

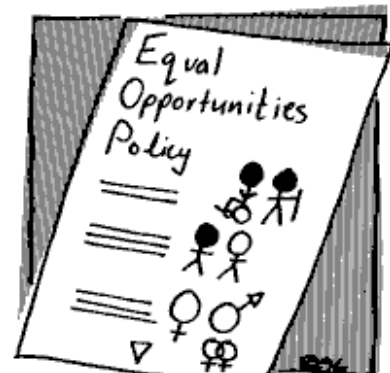
What is the Equal Opportunities Committee?

The Equal Opportunities Committee is part of the Scottish Parliament.

The job of the committee is to try to help all people in Scotland have the same chances as everyone else. No one should get unfair treatment because of things like age, disability, religion or any other reason. The Equal Opportunities Committee looks at the different treatment people get and tells the Scottish Parliament what it finds.

Members of the Equal Opportunities Committee are:

Richard Baker
Marlyn Glen
Bill Kidd
Margaret Mitchell (Chairperson)
Hugh O'Donnell
Elaine Smith (Vice Chairperson)
Sandra White
Bill Wilson



'Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities'

In 2006, the Equal Opportunities Committee wrote a report called 'Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities'. The report was about disability.

It looked at the things that make it difficult for disabled people to:

- get a job
- go to college
- do things in their free time
- use transport
- get information that they can understand
- have access to buildings and other places.



The report also looked at attitudes about disabled people.

Before they wrote the report, the committee spoke to lots of different people. They spoke to disabled people, organisations and senior politicians called Ministers to find out their views.

The report said that some things needed to change to make things more fair for disabled people.

What happened next

Nearly one year later, in 2007, the Equal Opportunities Committee wanted to find out if things had changed since the report was written.

To do this, it spoke again to senior Scottish politicians called Ministers.

The Committee also wrote to lots of different organisations to find out what has happened since the report was written. It got replies from 56 organisations.

Here is what the Equal Opportunities found since the 2006 report.

Supported Employment

The 2006 report said:

The Government and employment organisations should write some rules that will help disabled people get jobs.

What has happened:

A group has been set up to do this.
The Equal Opportunities Committee is happy with this.



Independent Living (getting the right support to live the way you want to live)

The 2006 report said:

The Government should look at how it can help more disabled people get support to have independent living. It said this was very important.

The Minister for Communities said that he would make a speech to say what they would do to help make this happen.

What has happened:

The Minister has not made a speech about independent living.

The Committee is disappointed about this. It wants the Minister for Communities to make a speech very soon to say what he can do to help more people have independent living.



Disability Equality Training (training to help people understand disability)

The 2006 report said:

More people should get disability equality training.

The Minister for Communities said that a group of disability organisations had been set up to think about disability equality training. He said that more work would happen on this in 2008.



What has happened:

The Committee does not think there has been much work on disability training in 2008. It asks the Minister for Communities to give an update on what has been happening.

Attitudes

The 2006 report said:

There should be a campaign to help fight bad attitudes towards disabled people. The campaign should be led and paid for by the Scottish Government.



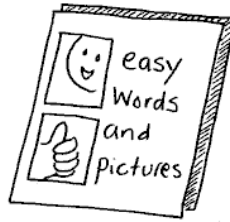
The Minister for Communities said it was better to do a campaign with others. He said this would be better than the Government doing a campaign on its own. He said he would speak to other organisations about this.

What has happened:

The Committee wants the Minister for Communities to tell them what he has done about this. It wants to know who he has spoken to and what plans they have made to do a campaign.

Information

The 2006 report said:



Work is being done on:



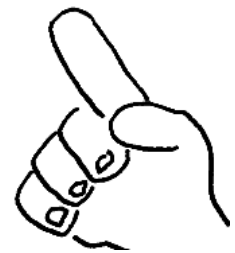
- putting information onto tape or CD
- putting information into Braille (for people who cannot see very well)
- sign language (for people who cannot hear very well)
- accessible information (like easy read and using pictures).

What has happened:

The Committee wants to know what work has been done on all of these things.

Other things

'Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities' listed some other things that need to change to make things more fair for disabled people. Work is happening to make these changes.



The Equal Opportunities Committee will keep up-to-date on how all of these changes are going. The Committee also noted 3 important areas for other committees to look at.

Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee

- The Equal Opportunities Committee is worried that some disabled students have to pay for a test which shows they have a disability. They have to do this even when it was known they had a disability when they were at school.

Health and Sport Committee

- The Equal Opportunities Committee wants this committee to think about how it can help more disabled people take part in sport.

Health and Sport Committee
Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee

- The Equal Opportunities Committee wants these 2 committees to think about how sport and leisure places can get enough money to be accessible for disabled people. This will make sure that disabled people get the same service as everyone else when they go to sport and leisure places.

Final findings

The Equal Opportunities Committee hopes that this summary shows the things that have happened since 'Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities' was written in 2006.

The Committee thinks that there are some good things happening to make things more fair for disabled people. They will keep up-to-date with the things that still need to happen.

The Committee says that all of the committees in the Scottish Parliament need to work together to help make the changes happen.

