



EHRC Single Equality Scheme Consultation

Engender is a membership organisation working on an anti-sexist agenda in Scotland and Europe to increase women's power and influence and make visible the impact of sexism on women, men and society. We provide information, analysis, training advice and networking to individuals, organisations and institutions who seek to achieve equality and justice.

Engender welcomes the opportunity to take part in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's first consultation

We wish to raise our concern about the risk of losing focus on gender inequality. Given that the introduction of the Equality and Human Rights Commission has also signalled the closure of the Equal Opportunities Commission, the statutory body dedicated to eliminating sex discrimination and promoting equality between women and men, we are very concerned to ensure that women's perspectives may be lost, and we are calling for safeguards against this. Clarity in the use of language is a vital point and we strongly believe there is a need to put 'women' back in the vocabulary.

Engender would like the Commission to clearly demonstrate a gender analysis from the outset and although we understand that this initial consultation seeks to find out what outcomes we think you should be aiming for and what actions we think you need to take to achieve them, we consider this to have too much of an inward focus. There needs to be much more of an outward focus and this is certainly something that, as an organisation working across Scotland and in Europe, we can help with.

The Gender Equality Duty (GED) is a form of legally enforceable 'gender mainstreaming'. That is, ensuring gender equality is part of core business. The GED should mean that women and men get services that meet their individual needs more closely. All public authorities, for example health providers, education, local government and the police have to comply. The duty will also apply to charities, voluntary and private sector organisations that are providing a public service as well as services provided by organisations under contract.

Gender covers all of the consultation topics listed and we believe that a gender lens should be used in relation to each. For example, the question of how the Commission will raise awareness must take cognizance of the systemic context

of sexism. How the Commission will influence others links to audit bodies and again the GED is already on the ground and affects every equality strand.