



House of Commons
Women and Equalities
Committee

**The role of Minister for
Women and Equalities
and the place of GEO
in government**

Second Report of Session 2017–19

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 23 May 2018*

Women and Equalities Committee

The Women and Equalities Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Government Equalities Office (GEO).

Current membership

[Mrs Maria Miller MP](#) (*Conservative, Basingstoke*) (Chair)

[Tonia Antoniazzi MP](#) (*Labour, Gower*)

[Angela Crawley MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Lanark and Hamilton East*)

[Philip Davies MP](#) (*Conservative, Shipley*)

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[Jared O'Mara MP](#) (*Independent, Sheffield, Hallam*) was a member of the Committee during this inquiry.

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/womenandequalities and in print by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Judith Boyce (Clerk), Luanne Middleton (Second Clerk), Holly Dustin, Tansy Hutchinson, and Shai Jacobs (Committee Specialists), Axell Kaubo (Inquiry Manager), Alexandra Hunter-Wainwright (Senior Committee Assistant), Mandy Sullivan (Committee Assistant), and Liz Parratt and Simon Horswell (Media Officers).

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Summary

Since 1997, the policy function for women and equalities issues has been located in eight different government departments. In the last two years alone, four different Ministers based in three different departments have held the brief for Women and Equalities. The most recent change in leadership has led to a situation where the ministerial team is split across two departments, with the civil servants supporting them in a third department.

Each move brings disruption and incurs costs. Each change of leadership requires time for a new Minister to get to grips with the brief. In each new department there will be beneficial policy synergies, but none of these departments has had an overwhelming claim to be the home of equalities in Whitehall, and the benefits have been incidental and short-lived rather than part of a planned strategy.

This level of movement and fragmentation is unsatisfactory and unsustainable if we want the Government Equalities Office (GEO) to be an effective engine of change towards a more equal society across government. As well as stability, GEO needs resources, ministerial time, and authority for its cross-governmental role.

A Cabinet sub-committee for equalities should be established and a cross-government equalities strategy developed, both led by the Minister for Women and Equalities. GEO should be represented separately and distinctly within the financial accounts and departmental plan of its current home department.

In the long term, the GEO's next move should be to the Cabinet Office. There, it should co-ordinate and monitor work across Whitehall on all equalities strands, with a remit to hold individual departments' feet to the fire on mainstreaming equalities in their own policy areas.

The part-time nature of the role of Minister for Women and Equalities contributes to instability, reduces its capacity and risks giving the impression that these issues are an afterthought rather than a thread that ought to run through all government policy-making. The Minister should also find a long-term home in the Cabinet Office as a full-time role.

The role of Minister for Women and Equalities and the place of GEO in government

Our inquiry

1. The House of Commons has given us the core task of scrutinising the work of the Government Equalities Office (GEO) and the Minister for Women and Equalities who is responsible for the GEO. The GEO has been unusually itinerant for a Whitehall function throughout its history, and there has been a high level of turnover among the people holding ministerial responsibility for it.

2. On 30 April 2018, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP became Minister for Women and Equalities in addition to her role as Secretary of State for International Development. This change, like many others before it, was not a result of any need to move the Women and Equalities post itself. Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP became Minister for Women and Equalities in January 2018 when Rt Hon Justine Greening MP resigned from the Cabinet, and she added the portfolio to her role as Home Secretary. Amber Rudd's resignation as Home Secretary on 30 April 2018 meant that, after only 110 days, the title was passed on again. Within the last two years, four different people have held the post of Minister for Women and Equalities, and they have been based in three different government departments.

3. We were concerned about the effect of this level of change on leadership of work across Whitehall to achieve a more equal society for groups protected by the Equality Act 2010. Shortly after Penny Mordaunt's appointment, we took evidence on this subject from the Institute for Government, the Equality and Diversity Forum and Janet Veitch, a consultant and former head of gender mainstreaming in the Women's Unit, which is reflected in this report; we have also drawn on previous evidence sessions with GEO ministers and other inquiries in reaching our conclusions.

4. This is not just a matter of theoretical or bureaucratic interest to Whitehall insiders and people who follow politics. Policy challenges related to equality affect people's daily lives throughout the country. The overall gender pay gap stands at 18.4 per cent and is particularly acute for women in their forties and fifties.¹ Women make up only six per cent of FTSE 100 Chief Executive Officers, 17.6 per cent of national newspaper editors and 32 per cent of Members of Parliament.² Women are more than twice as likely as men to experience sexual harassment in the workplace.³ Despite being just 14 per cent of the population, BAME men and women are 25 per cent of prisoners, and over 40 per cent of young people in custody are from BAME backgrounds.⁴ One in eight of the working-age population are from a BAME background, but only one in ten are in employment and only one in 16 top management positions are held by an ethnic minority person.⁵ Full-time disabled workers earn £75 a week less than full-time non-disabled people on average,

1 ONS, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings: 2017 provisional results](#), October 2017

2 Fawcett Society, [Sex and Power Index 2018](#), April 2018

3 ComRes survey for BBC, [Sexual harassment in the workplace](#), November 2017

4 [The Lammy Review](#), September 2017, p.3

5 [Race in the workplace: the McGregor-Smith Review](#), February 2017, p.50

and an estimated 1.8 million disabled people have unmet housing needs.⁶ Forty-five per cent of LGBT pupils—including 64 per cent of trans pupils—are bullied in school for being LGBT.⁷ The structures and leadership that the Government puts in place to tackle these challenges matter.

The history of the Government Equalities Office

5. The recent instability in the position of equalities in the machinery of government continues a long-term trend. A table below sets out the changes that have taken place since 1997 in responsibility for policy on women and equalities. The Government Equalities Office was created in 2007 as an independent department and successor to the Women and Equality Unit, having been spun out of the Department for Communities and Local Government. It remained separate until April 2011; since that point it has been based successively in the Home Office, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education, before returning to the Home Office. These changes have not always been co-ordinated with changes in the portfolios of the responsible ministers, and at times the portfolios for ‘women’ and ‘equalities’ have been held by different ministers. Sometimes there have been two junior ministers connected to the GEO, and sometimes only one.

6 Papworth Trust, [Disability Facts and Figures 2018](#), March 2018

7 Stonewall, [School Report: the experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain's schools in 2017](#), July 2017

Women and Equalities in the machinery of government, 1997–2018

May 1997	Department of Social Security	Harriet Harman Secretary of State for Social Security and Minister for Women
July 1998	Cabinet Office	Baroness Jay of Paddington Leader of the House of Lords and Minister for Women
June 2001	Department of Trade and Industry	Patricia Hewitt Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Minister for Women
May 2005		Tessa Jowell Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Minister for Women
May 2006	Department for Communities and Local Government	Ruth Kelly Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Minister for Women and Equality
June 2007	Government Equalities Office	Harriet Harman Leader of the House of Commons and Minister for Women and Equality
May 2010		Theresa May Home Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities
April 2011	Home Office	Theresa May Home Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities
September 2012	Department for Culture, Media and Sport	Maria Miller Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Minister for Women and Equalities
April 2014		Nicky Morgan Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Minister for Women and Sajid Javid Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Minister for Equalities
July 2014		Nicky Morgan Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities
September 2015	Department for Education	Nicky Morgan Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities
July 2016		Justine Greening Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities
January 2018		Amber Rudd Home Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities
April 2018 - present	Home Office (budget) Dept for Education (staff)	Penny Mordaunt Secretary of State for International Development and Minister for Women and Equalities

6. Since July 2017, the Minister for Women and Equalities has been supported by two junior ministers, one with a brief for women and one leading on equalities. At the time this arrangement was established, the civil servants working for GEO, the two junior ministers and the Minister for Women and Equalities were all based in the Department for Education. The changes since have resulted in a complex situation whereby, at the time of writing, the civil servants are still in Department for Education accommodation, GEO's funding is in the process of being transferred from Education to the Home Office, the two junior ministers hold Home Office portfolios in addition to their equalities roles, and the Minister for Women and Equalities is in the Department for International Development.

The consequences of churn

7. Machinery of government changes can be costly, and are always disruptive to some extent.⁸ Janet Veitch, who worked through many such changes as a civil servant, told us that with each move, “the work stops or at least comes to a juddering halt for a time”.⁹ Aside from bedding in to a new policy environment and adjusting to the culture and working practices of a new department, arrangements such as staff accommodation, IT access, transfer of records and payroll take time to implement.¹⁰ The transfer of budgets can be disputed, and if an incoming department suspects a particular function will not stay with them for long, investment in and access for those teams will not be prioritised.¹¹ Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP has described the move of GEO from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to Education during her tenure as Minister for Women and Equalities as “quite tricky and quite traumatic”.¹²

8. Bureaucracy and lines of reporting lag behind politics: the transfer of the budget for GEO from the Department for Education to the Home Office was recorded in the Main Supply Estimates for 2018–19, published just ten days before the change of Minister from the Home Office to the Department for International Development.¹³ At the time of writing, GEO's work was still incorporated in the Department for Education Single Departmental Plan, which was published in December 2017.¹⁴

9. The Institute for Government has emphasised that, where machinery of government changes have a positive outcome, it is because they fulfil a clear business need.¹⁵ Ian Watmore, who led the establishment of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and its subsequent incorporation into the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, has written that machinery of government changes should only be considered when “the end result is truly strategic” and the longer-term business case is “compelling”.¹⁶

10. As a standalone department, GEO was small in size, and it has been reported that its incorporation into the Home Office in 2011 was at least partly intended to reduce the back office and ministerial support costs it incurred as an independent unit.¹⁷ The more

8 National Audit Office, [Reorganising central government](#), 18 March 2010, HC 452, Session 2009–10

9 Q103

10 Cabinet Office, [Guidance on machinery of government changes](#), October 2015

11 Q103

12 Q101

13 HM Treasury, [Main Supply Estimates 2018 to 2019](#), 19 April 2018

14 Department for Education, [Single departmental plan](#), accessed 18 May 2018

15 Institute for Government, [Reshaping Government](#), 2015

16 [“A word on machinery of government changes—from a man who knows”](#), Institute for Government blog, 9 March 2015

17 Institute for Government, [Reshaping Government](#), 2015, p.9

recent moves, however, appear to have been motivated not by any strategic purpose but by unconnected changes in ministerial personnel. This is also a consequence of the ‘part-time’ nature of the role of Minister for Women and Equalities, which has been added to the portfolios of various Secretaries of State.

11. Ministerial reshuffles are a further source of disruption. In 2013, the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee reported that “even the most able Minister needs time to become familiar with a new brief. [...] there will be an inevitable delay before they are fully effective.”¹⁸

12. The effect of this churn is not just felt in the Civil Service or in the Cabinet. Ali Harris, Chief Executive of the Equality and Diversity Forum, told us that frequent ministerial changes slow progress because of lack of time to establish relationships with stakeholders and to engage with the more difficult issues. She commented that in periods of change, “within the sector, it is hard to know where you and your issues stand”.¹⁹ Janet Veitch argued that the perceived ‘portability’ of the equalities remit means that “you get no real traction in any area. You do not have the machinery or the stability to support you in doing proper delivery work”.²⁰ She also suggested that

in terms of perception, people wonder whether this is a priority or not, because you cannot think of anything that is really important that would be moved around in this somewhat cavalier way. Think about something like civil contingencies, for example. It does not move because you really want it to work. You have a proper strategy. You have co-ordinating mechanisms around Government to make sure that all the work is brought together. That does not happen [for equalities] at the moment.²¹

GEO’s relationship with its host departments

13. We do not deny that particular moves have the potential to produce some desirable or useful effects. In October 2017, we asked the then Ministers for Equality (Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, also Minister for School Standards) and for Women (Rt Hon Anne Milton MP, also Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills) about the rationale for GEO being based in the Department for Education. Nick Gibb argued that it made “perfect sense” because “if you are trying to change attitudes to individuals, whether they have a disability or whether they are of a different race or whether they are LGBT, the starting point is our education system”.²²

14. The advantages that arise as a result of the Women and Equalities brief being placed in one or other department are largely coincidental, however. Arguments could be made for placing the Government’s lead on equalities issues in any one of half a dozen or more departments that have substantial policy and delivery contributions to make in this area, but no one department has an obvious and compelling claim on it.²³ The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government leads on integration, race and faith

18 Political and Constitutional Reform Committee, Second Report of Session 2013–14, [The impact and effectiveness of ministerial reshuffles](#), HC 255

19 Qq93, 99

20 Q92

21 Q100

22 Q40

23 Q95 [Marcus Shephard, Gavin Freeguard]

policy; the Home Office oversees strategies on Violence Against Women and Girls and hate crime; the Department for Work and Pensions leads on issues related to age and houses the Office for Disability Issues; responsibility for flexible working and sponsorship of work on women on boards falls to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; and the Race Disparity Unit sits in the Cabinet Office. Since our Committee was established in June 2015, we have taken oral evidence from ministers in eleven different departments, and requested evidence from ministers in two further departments. Equality matters everywhere in government.

15. It might be argued that, by circulating around Whitehall, GEO could act as a sort of equalities mainstreaming roadshow, inducing each host department in turn to take a more rigorous approach to equality in its policymaking and delivery. While it was located in the Department for Education, we welcomed work being brought forward in that department on statutory relationships and sex education, guidance on responding to sexual harassment between students, and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. We heard some scepticism about the after-effects of moves between departments, however; Janet Veitch recalled that “in practice what tended to happen was that the priority was dropped as soon as the ministerial brief was lost from the department”.²⁴ The Institute for Government has noted that, where a policy area has repeatedly passed between departments, solving a perceived problem of co-ordination with one function can come at the expense of breaking connections with the functions left behind.²⁵

16. As with all these changes, the role of Minister for Women and Equalities passing to the Secretary of State for International Development brings both opportunities and risks. On one hand, the Department for International Development (DfID) has been proactive in comparison with other departments in the extent to which it takes a gender perspective in its work. There is undoubtedly some good work in the international development sector, including on engaging civil society and evaluation of initiatives, that could valuably be reflected back into the UK context. On the other hand, DfID does not deliver services in the UK and does not have a domestic policy locus. Its expertise and authority lie in the international arena.²⁶ When our predecessor Committee reported on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the UK in March 2017, it noted the incongruity of the policy co-ordination for domestic work on all the Sustainable Development Goals sitting with DfID, a department whose focus is international. The report recommended instead that the Cabinet Office take on this function, a recommendation that the Government rejected.²⁷ The danger is that gender equality and other equality strands are pigeonholed as a matter for action abroad, not at home.

24 Q100

25 Institute for Government, [Reshaping Government](#), 2015, p.1

26 Q95 [Janet Veitch]

27 Women and Equalities Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2016–17, [Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the UK](#), HC 885, and Second Special Report of Session 2017–19, [Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the UK: Government and Office for National Statistics Responses](#), HC 426

Exerting influence across government and across equality characteristics

17. It will be vital for the new Minister for Women and Equalities to demonstrate that she can—in the words of one of her predecessors, Rt Hon Justine Greening MP—be “sharp-elbowed across government” to ensure that equalities is a high priority for all departments.²⁸ The degree to which GEO is intended to be an engine of equality across all policy areas and protected characteristics is, however, somewhat unclear. Only policy relating to women, sexual orientation and transgender equality are led by GEO, each supported by a range of project work including gender pay gap reporting, returner programmes, the national LGBT survey and responsibility for the Gender Recognition Act. More broadly, the GEO describes its purpose as “improving equality and reducing discrimination and disadvantage for all in the UK; improving people’s life chances at work, and in public and political life”, and it has responsibility for the Equality Act 2010.²⁹

18. The mechanisms by which this broader role is to be achieved, however, have not been explained. Among the responsibilities of the Minister for Equalities, Baroness Williams of Trafford, is “cross-government equality strategy and legislation”.³⁰ Noting that none of the GEO’s performance indicators related to this role, and that there is no published strategy document, we asked Baroness Williams’ predecessor, Nick Gibb, to outline the cross-government equality strategy. He responded:

We want to increase equality in life generally and particularly those protected characteristics in the Equality Act. Whenever we come across unfairness in society relating to those issues, we will take action. That is what is happening in all the government departments across Whitehall.³¹

Asked whether this meant that, for example, the GEO would be involved in monitoring the equalities impacts of Budgets, he replied that it was the responsibility of each individual department to take equalities into account when developing policy and to ensure that they complied with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Pressed on whether departments which were found wanting in their compliance would be held to account by the GEO, Mr Gibb reaffirmed that it was for individual departments to take the necessary steps and for Parliament to hold them to account.³²

19. The degree to which GEO has levers or capacity to influence policy in government departments relating to other protected characteristics is also uncertain. Responsibility for aspects of policy on race, disability, age and religion and belief sit in and sometimes across different departments, and there appears to be no formal role for GEO in overseeing, co-ordinating or monitoring this work, or in checking that the Equality Act is being implemented effectively in relation to these groups. There is also no central function examining equality issues from an intersectional perspective, looking at how different equality characteristics interact.³³

28 Oral evidence taken on [18 January 2017](#), HC (2016–17) 933, Q22

29 Government Equalities Office, [“About us”](#), accessed 18 May 2018

30 Gov.uk, [“Baroness Williams of Trafford”](#), accessed 18 May 2018

31 Q25

32 Qq32–39

33 Q93

20. In light of this dispersal of responsibility, witnesses to several of our and our predecessor Committee's inquiries have called for a cross-departmental, strategic approach that would help GEO play a strong and purposeful co-ordinating role, and provide a platform for engaging with civil society.³⁴ The lack of a gender equality action plan in the UK was raised as a concern in the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women in 2013, and it is striking that, while DfID has adopted a new gender equality strategy for development policy, there is no equivalent in domestic policy.³⁵ In our report on *Ensuring strong equalities legislation after the EU exit*, we recommended that the Government develop a formal cross-government, pan-equality strategy.³⁶ Without this, it is difficult for us to hold GEO and its Ministers to account for their role in improving equality and reducing discrimination and disadvantage for all in the UK. The Violence Against Women and Girls strategy has been suggested as a model of a robust, cross-government strategy with measurable targets that is supported by resources and a clear governance structure that incorporates the expertise of civil society.³⁷ A strategy could also guarantee a measure of continuity and long-term thinking in the midst of frequent changes in machinery and leadership.³⁸

The nature of the Minister's role

21. It is all the more important that the Minister for Women and Equalities has the tools to make an impact across Whitehall given that this is a part-time job. Every Minister who has been given the role has already had a full-time job to do as a Secretary of State. To some extent this may be mitigated by the appointment of junior ministers, but they too have their hands full with departmental roles. It could be argued that the portfolio benefits from the gravitas and profile of a Secretary of State who is able to implement equalities measures in their own department as well as influencing colleagues around the Cabinet table.

22. There is, however, no getting away from the fact that the way the job is allocated makes the role look like an afterthought, and that any postholder with a demanding 'day job' will understandably struggle to give it the attention it needs. Marcus Shephard of the Institute for Government suggested that "in the battle between [the Women and Equalities brief] and a line Department, the line Department is almost always going to win."³⁹ This constraint on capacity may be preventing the role fulfilling its potential as an effective cross-Whitehall watchdog on equalities.

23. We have considered whether, in the future, it is essential for the Minister for Women and Equalities to be a woman.⁴⁰ There is undoubtedly merit in recognising that the interests of half the population are not only a matter of importance to members of that half, and that the 'equalities' part of the brief relates to a wide range of other characteristics. However,

34 Q94; Women and Equalities Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2016–17, [Ensuring strong equalities legislation after the EU exit](#), HC 799, paras 76–77

35 Department for International Development, [DfID Strategic Vision for Gender Equality](#), March 2018; CEDAW Committee, [Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#), July 2013, para 29

36 Women and Equalities Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2016–17, [Ensuring strong equalities legislation after the EU exit](#), HC 799, para 79

37 Q117

38 Q94

39 Q94

40 Qq106–7

representation and appearances matter, and the overall presence of women in public life is some way short of a comfortable plateau of parity where a step such as appointing a man as Minister for Women might be taken lightly. The current, unspoken requirement for the Minister to be a woman can, however, make it even harder to achieve continuity in this role. It would plainly help to have more women in the Cabinet; even better would be to make women and equalities a standalone brief in its own right.

Conclusions and recommendations

24. We welcome the Secretary of State for International Development to her new role as Minister for Women and Equalities. We wish her well in the role and look forward to holding her to account on progress towards a more equal society.

25. **The rate of change in the positions of the Minister for Women and Equalities and the Government Equalities Office is unsatisfactory and unsustainable. It is a source of disruption and confusion, both within the Civil Service and among stakeholders. It also risks giving the impression that equality is a low priority for the Government, as does the part-time nature of the Minister's role. As long as the function is tacked on to an existing portfolio, there is a danger that the policy priorities of that department will either overshadow or dominate the work of the GEO. Meanwhile, the relevance of equalities issues to all government departments, even those that would likely never be considered a suitable base for GEO, is diminished by this arrangement.**

26. Further upheaval in the short term is not desirable. The Secretary of State for International Development already faces considerable practical challenges in her new role, with civil servants still located in the Department for Education and junior ministers and budgets based in the Home Office. *Whatever arrangements are made in the short term to rationalise or cope with this situation, GEO should be represented separately and distinctly within the financial accounts and departmental plan of its home department to enable effective scrutiny of its expenditure and activity to take place.*

27. A long-term solution is needed, however. The Government Equalities Office must be allowed to bed down in an arrangement that promotes stability and continuity, but that also gives it a platform to build capacity for exerting influence across Whitehall. A place at the heart of government, in the Cabinet Office, is the natural solution. *Plans should be put in place now for the GEO's next move, when it comes, to be to the Cabinet Office. The next Minister for Women and Equalities should have the job on a full-time basis and be part of the Cabinet Office team, with the right to attend Cabinet. Junior ministerial roles should also be based in the Cabinet Office, but could be jointly held with departments whose remits reflect the Government's top equalities priorities at the time, such as the Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions or the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.*

28. *Alongside this change, the role of the Minister for Women and Equalities and the GEO in relation to all protected characteristics, including race, age, disability and religion and belief, should be clarified. This should be a co-ordination, strategy and monitoring role, with a remit to hold individual departments' feet to the fire on mainstreaming equalities in their own policy areas. GEO should be a critical friend, impossible to ignore and bolstered by the personal authority of the Prime Minister. It could continue to deliver specific projects, but its personnel and budgetary capacity to drive change on a broader scale should be enhanced.*

29. Machinery of government changes are not the only way to achieve an increase in influence, and other structures should be put in place in the medium term to help to secure continuity and a high profile for equalities work, insulating it to some degree from political vicissitudes and the risk of being subsumed into or overshadowed by

another department. *A Cabinet sub-committee for equalities should be established, chaired by the Minister for Women and Equalities. GEO should assume responsibility for developing a formal, written Government equalities strategy to which individual departments must contribute.*

30. Ultimately, while continuity and status are ends worth pursuing, the most important thing is that the equalities function within government, wherever it sits, is adequately supported to make an impact within Whitehall and therefore within the lives of people in the UK. For this it needs resources, ministerial time, and authority for its cross-governmental role—a structure that will provide support for the overall aim of reducing inequality, regardless of reshuffles and machinery of government moves. We look forward to hearing from the new Minister for Women and Equalities how this will be achieved.

Formal minutes

Wednesday 23 May 2018

Members present:

Mrs Maria Miller, in the Chair

Tonia Antoniazzi Eddie Hughes

Angela Crawley Jess Phillips

Vicky Ford

Draft Report (*The role of Minister for Women and Equalities and the place of the GEO in government*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 30 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Second Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

[Adjourned till Wednesday 6 June 2018]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Wednesday 11 October 2017

Question number

Rt Hon Mr Nick Gibb MP, Minister for Equalities, **Rt Hon Anne Milton MP**, Minister for Women.

[Q1–90](#)

Wednesday 9 May 2018

Ali Harris, Chief Executive, Equality and Diversity Forum, **Janet Veitch OBE**, former Head of Gender Mainstreaming, Women's Unit, **Gavin Freeguard**, Associate Director, Institute for Government, **Marcus Shephard**, Researcher, Institute for Government.

[Q91–127](#)

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website. The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2017–19

First Report	Fathers and the workplace	HC 358
First Special Report	Ensuring strong equalities legislation after the EU exit: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2016–17	HC 385
Second Special Report	Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the UK: Government and Office for National Statistics Responses to the Committee's Eighth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 426