

Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: letter to the Minister for Equalities

The independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities has provided an update to the government and the sponsoring minister, Kemi Badenoch MP.

The update calls on the government to put social mobility at the heart of its equalities agenda, and sets the Commission's report date.

Since its launch in July 2020, the Commission has taken evidence from a wide range of stakeholders representing thousands of people across the UK, and has conducted a deep dive into the latest disparities data. The evidence and data have unearthed the multiple, interacting factors driving life chances for people in the UK.

The Commission's chair, Dr Tony Sewell, says "the evidence is showing that many of the disparities are driven by differences in gender, age, class and geography", rather than race alone.

The impact of COVID-19, however, has made it difficult for the Commission to complete extensive and vital engagement activity with public, private and voluntary organisations, frontline staff and citizens in communities across the country. For example, the recent national restrictions coincided with the launch of the public call for evidence – issued at the end of October – and proved particularly disruptive to the work of the Commission.

With over 2,300 responses to the Commission's call for evidence, it is clear that the public wants the Commission and government to hear their views, and it is right that the Commission is able to review and consider all submissions in full. The Chair has therefore asked that the work of the Commission continue until February 2021, when it will then report to the Prime Minister.

In an update to the Minister for Equalities on its work so far, Dr Sewell recommends that the sponsorship of the Social Mobility Commission should be brought into the Cabinet Office's Equality Hub. The Commission believes the move would help the government take a more rounded view of inequalities and improve life chances for people, whatever their race or ethnicity, and whichever part of the UK they live in.

The [Social Mobility Commission](#) is a non-departmental public body, currently sponsored by the Department for Education. The government is considering the recommendation to bring the Social Mobility Commission under the work of the Equality Hub.