



department for
culture, media
and sport

MINISTERIAL WRITTEN STATEMENT

FRIDAY 1 MARCH 2013

CASTE

Minister for Women and Equalities (Helen Grant): This Government believes that no-one should suffer prejudice because of caste. That is why we have been giving the issue careful consideration in order to identify the most appropriate and effective way of tackling the problem.

We are therefore pleased to announce that the Government Equalities Office and the Department for Communities for Local Government have appointed Talk For A Change to engage with the affected communities to run an educational programme to help tackle this complex and sensitive issue.

Talk For A Change will be working with interested organisations and individuals, particularly from within the Hindu and Sikh communities, to find practical solutions to the problems and harm that caste-based prejudice can cause. Talk For A Change has extensive experience of facilitating difficult conversations and working with local partners to address tough issues, helping to build positive relationships and



improving
the quality
of life for all

resilient communities.

This educational programme will be used to raise awareness of those channels of help and redress that are already open to those who feel themselves to have been victims of caste discrimination or harassment. The programme will also be used to generate educational material that will subsequently be made available to local authorities, schools, colleges, employers, police and any others who may be likely to come into contact with caste-related issues.

Talk For A Change will be engaging with partners from local communities to deliver regional events in London, the Midlands and the North. Participation in these events will be open to all individuals and organisations who wish to take part in this opportunity.

We believe that this programme will be an appropriate and targeted way of dealing with incidents relating to caste and which are not already susceptible to criminal law or other remedies. We have decided not to exercise the caste power contained with the Equality Act 2010 at the present time – though we have no plans to remove the power from the Act, in case this position should change.

In addition to the work being done by Talk For A Change, we have also been in discussion with the Equality and Human Rights Commission about caste discrimination. The Government Equalities Office and the Commission have agreed that the latter can usefully contribute to this issue by examining over the next few months the nature of caste prejudice and harassment as evidenced by existing studies, and the extent to which this problem is likely to be addressed by either legislative or other solutions. The Commission will publish its findings later in 2013.