

The law can help us make parks more inclusive

Thursday 9 June, 2022

Parks and public spaces don't work for teenage girls, say campaigning charity Make Space for Girls. Up and down the country, outdoors facilities for teenagers are mostly used by boys, and girls end up with nowhere to go.

"Facilities for teenagers almost always means a skate park or a fenced pitch, which tend to be dominated by boys," says Make Space for Girls co-founder Susannah Walker. "This discrimination often goes unnoticed - but that's what we want to change."

This kind of structural inequality is what the Public Sector Equality Duty (part of the Equality Act 2010) is designed to address, by encouraging public bodies to consider potential discrimination in their decision making.

Imogen Clark is the other co-founder of Make Space for Girls and she thinks the duty has an important role to play. *"Once councils become aware of the discrimination, most want to change things. The PSED provides a great framework to support this. But when we talk to councillors we get asked a lot of questions about how the duty works for parks and public spaces. So we are delighted to have teamed up with national law firm Weightmans to produce a note to respond to some of these."*

The note covers all the most common questions and sets out how the PSED applies to facilities for teenagers and how councils can use it in practice to create parks and public spaces which work better for all teenagers.

Simon Goacher, Partner at Weightmans who assisted with the project said:
"At Weightmans, we have worked hard to create an inclusive environment for all our

"We are pleased to have been able to support Make Space for Girls with this advice note for local authorities on PSED, which we hope offers some clarity on how it can be used to develop and deliver accessible and safe facilities for girls within the community.

colleagues, and equality remains a key priority.

I would urge any council seeking guidance on the application of PSED to contact the firm and we can offer specific advice for your circumstances."

"We're really grateful that Weightmans have partnered with us," says Clark. "The Public Sector Equality Duty is a great tool, and this note will help councils use it to create better facilities for teenage girls."

The note can be found here:

makespaceforgirls.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/QA-on-the-PSED.pdf

ENDS

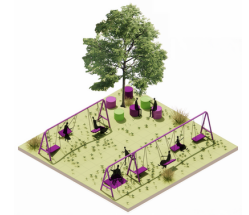
For more information or high-res images, please contact:

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Make Space for Girls is a charity which campaigns for parks and public spaces to be designed with teenage girls in mind. Currently most provision for teenagers – skate parks and fenced pitches – is dominated by boys, and girls are designed out of the public realm. This discrimination affects girls' physical and mental health, it's unfair and tells them that they belong at home. We're working with councils, developers and public bodies to create better, more equal places which include everyone.

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