



## **Reflections on the anniversary of the untimely death of Rowen Jade**

It seems hard to believe that it is now a year since Rowen Jade died. At Equality 2025 we have missed her passion and wisdom a great deal: too often it is only after someone is no longer with us that we fully appreciate just how important their contribution was. I, personally, learned a great deal from Rowen and I know that all of us in Equality 2025 have done our best to continue and extend the work she initiated based on the strong foundations that she laid. Without these, and the reputation she established, we would have been far less effective in our work.

Over the last year we have agreed a new work plan with the Minister for Disabled People that focuses on four areas:

- welfare reform (including Right to Control initiatives)
- employment, training and transitions from education to work
- participation in, and contribution to, public and community life (including disability related harassment and hate crime), and
- strategy (assisting the Office for Disability Issues in developing the Government's strategic narrative on disability).

We have also continued our work on the Olympics/Paralympics and legacy issues. Often our contribution has been in the early stages of policy development, but in pursuance of work in these areas members of Equality 2025 have been a part of numerous working and advisory groups and submitted more formal written advice. Senior officials have also attended Equality 2025 meetings for a more in-depth consideration of issues relating to disabled people.

As well as this core work, we have responded to requests for confidential advice from a number of government departments.

This information will be added to our website when it is no longer confidential.

We have also submitted non-confidential responses to several consultation exercises this year, including: the SEND Green Paper, the Social Security Advisory Committee Public Consultation on Passported Benefits under Universal Credit, the NHS Future Forum – “Pausing, Listening, Reflecting, Learning’ Listening Exercise”, the Work and Pensions Select Committee Inquiry into the Migration from Incapacity Benefit to Employment Support Allowance, Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation consultation on “Reasonable Adjustment of General Qualifications” and HM Revenue and Customs consultation on “Incapacitated Person – A Modern Definition”. Copies of these consultation responses will be available on our website in due course.

When Rowen was with us she initiated a system of gaining feedback from those to whom we provided confidential advice. Although we cannot share the details our initial evaluation of this feedback indicates that, in the vast majority of cases, this advice was considered helpful by those who received it and had an impact on their policy development/review.

We cannot hope to replace Rowen, but we have done our best to continue her excellent work with Equality 2025. We thank her for the example she set and the strong basis for development that she laid. We hope, despite the challenging times we face, we have been able to use these to make some contribution towards building a society in which all of us have the opportunity to live in our own homes, realise our aspirations, contribute as equal citizens to all facets of family, community and economic life, and exercise choice and control over our lives and the help we receive.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Perkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Perkins  
Chair of Equality 2025  
2 September 2011