

HOW DOES THE EQUALITY ACT PROTECT YOU?

What is the Equality Act?

The Equality Act 2010 is an Act of Parliament which forms the basis of anti-discrimination law in Great Britain. The Act is a consolidation of 116 pre-existing pieces of anti-discrimination legislation. It applies to everyone in Great Britain and guards against discrimination based on nine protected characteristics.

@EqualityActRev

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**THE EQUALITY
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How does the Equality Act work?

Protected Characteristics

There are nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act. It is illegal to discriminate against someone because of one of these characteristics. They are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Sectors

The Equality Act protects you from discrimination in the following places:

- At work
- In locations where services are being provided
- In commercial and residential premises
- In educational settings
- In associations eg political parties, youth clubs

Prohibited Conduct

The Equality Act prohibits the following discriminatory behaviours:

- Direct discrimination: when an employer, service provider, educator etc. knowingly subjects an individual to unfavourable treatment because of one of the nine protected characteristics.
- Indirect discrimination: when an employer, service provider, educator etc. inadvertently disadvantages an individual because of one of the nine protected characteristics by making a seemingly neutral provision.
- Harassment: unwanted conduct related to one of the protected characteristics that violates dignity or creates an intimidating environment.

Next steps

If you think you have been subject to discrimination, you have a number of options available to you.

1. [The Citizens Advice Bureau](#) is a good source of information and advice. It will be able to provide you with more information about your options and advise you on appropriate next steps.
2. Consider informal dispute resolution. [The Equality Advisory & Support Service](#) have a dedicated team of advisors that can help you to navigate the process.
3. In some cases, it might be necessary to issue a legal claim. Employment Tribunals deal with cases of discrimination in the workplace. All other cases will be heard in the County Court. It is important to note that there are strict deadlines to abide by. Any claim of discrimination in the workplace must be issued to an Employment Tribunal within three months of the incident. For claims being heard in the County Court, you will have six months less one day to put in a court claim. Remember, you might be eligible to receive legal aid. You can check your eligibility online.

Useful Resources

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/about-discrimination/equality-act-2010-discrimination-and-your-rights/>

<https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/>

<https://www.gov.uk/check-legal-aid>

Help improve the Equality Act

The Equality Act Review is campaigning to amend the Equality Act.

At present, the Equality Act does not protect against discrimination on the grounds of homelessness, low socio-economic status and/or poverty, caste, or immigration status, all of which can give rise to unequal treatment.

Unfortunately, it is failing real people and real lives. The Equality Act Review is petitioning the government to expand the protected characteristics, strengthen the existing protected characteristics, and implement a mandatory 10 year review of the Act to ensure its continued relevance.

If you have experienced discrimination but are not protected by the Equality Act, please get in touch to tell us your story. Your contributions could help to inform our research and reports. Alternatively, visit our website to take part in our public consultation. Let us know how the Equality Act could be improved and have your voice heard.

<https://www.equalityactreview.co.uk/public-consultation>

Get in touch

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