

# 8. Your rights to equality from Parliaments, politicians and political parties.

Equality Act 2010 Guidance of your rights.  
**Vol. 8 of 9.**



**Equality and  
Human Rights  
Commission**

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# Introduction

This guide is one of a series written by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to explain your rights to equality. These guides will support the introduction of the Equality Act 2010. This Act brings together lots of different equality laws, many of which we have had for a long time. By doing this, the Act makes equality law simpler and easier to understand.

The full list of guides is:

1. Associations, clubs and societies
2. Businesses
3. Criminal and civil justice
4. Health and social care
5. Housing
6. Local council and central government and immigration
7. Parliaments, politicians and political parties
8. Transport
9. Voluntary and community sector organisations, including charities

## Other guides and alternative formats

We have also produced:

- A separate series of guides which explain your rights to equality at work.
- Different guides for people and organisations who are employing people, or who are delivering services.

If you require this guide in an alternative format and/or language please contact the relevant helpline to discuss your needs.

### **England**

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline

FREEPOST RRLG-GHUX-CTR

Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3AQ

Telephone: 0845 604 6610

Textphone: 0845 604 6620

Fax: 0845 604 6630

### **Scotland**

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline

FREEPOST RSAB-YJEJ-EXUJ

The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DU

Telephone: 0845 604 5510

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### **Wales**

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline

FREEPOST RRLR-UEYB-UYZL

3rd Floor, 3 Callaghan Square, Cardiff CF10 5BT

Telephone: 0845 604 8810

Textphone: 0845 604 8820

Fax: 0845 604 8830

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

## The legal status of this guidance

This guidance applies to England, Scotland and Wales. It has been aligned with the Code of Practice on Services, Public Functions and Associations. Following this guidance should have the same effect as following the Code. In other words, if a person or an organisation who has duties under the Equality Act 2010's provisions on services, public functions and associations does what this guidance says they must do, it may help them to avoid an adverse decision by a court in proceedings brought under the Equality Act 2010.

This guide is based on equality law as it is at 1 October 2010. Any future changes in the law will be reflected in further editions.

This guide was last updated on 23 July 2010. You should check with the Equality and Human Rights Commission if it has been replaced by a more recent version.

# 1. Your rights to equality from Parliaments, politicians and political parties

## Who is this guide for?

This guide is for you if you are a member of the public using services provided by, or otherwise coming into contact with:

- The United Kingdom (Westminster) Parliament
- The Scottish Parliament
- The National Assembly for Wales
- Politicians

in circumstances where equality law applies.

This guide is also for you if you are a **member**, **associate member** or **guest** of a political party, or a **prospective member** or **guest**. It tells you:

- how you can expect a political party to treat you if it is doing what equality law says it must do, in relation to its terms of membership and its activities, and
- how political parties can use **positive action** in the selection of candidates.

If you are not a member or associate member of the party or a guest of one of these people or of the political party, but are using the party's services as a member of the public, then you should read the guide to your rights to equality in relation to businesses instead.

For example:

Someone who is not a party member but is hiring a function room at a political party's premises so they can hold a meeting there will have the same rights as someone who is hiring a room from a pub. These rights are slightly different from the rights a member, associate member or guest will have. A person who is attending the meeting at the invitation of the hirer of the room will also be a service user, rather than a guest in the sense in which it is used in this guide.



# Does equality law apply?

Equality law applies to:

- People or organisations that provide **goods**, **facilities** or **services** to the public or a section of the public, or carrying out public functions.
- **Associations**, which includes political parties.

It doesn't matter if services, public functions or membership, associate membership or visiting as a guest are free.

Equality law affects everyone who is providing a service or carrying out a function, including people who are running an organisation or who might do something on its behalf, such as staff or volunteers.

But there are sometimes differences in how equality law applies to different people and organisations or for specific activities or in specific situations.

## What's in this guide?

This guide explains how equality law applies in general and when it is different or does not apply in relation to:

- The UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales
- Politicians
- Political parties.

## *What else is in this guide?*

This guide also contains the following sections, which are similar in each guide in the series, and contain information you will probably need to understand what we tell you about your rights to equality in relation to parliaments, politicians and political parties:

- Information on how people and organisations must avoid discrimination in the way they – and their staff – behave and how they run their association and provide their services, whether that is face to face, at a particular place, using written materials, by the internet or over the telephone.
- Information about when a person or organisation is responsible for what other people do, such as their employees if they have them.
- Information about reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people.

- Advice on what to do if you believe you've been discriminated against.
- A list of words and key ideas you need to understand this guide – all words highlighted in **bold** are in this list. They are highlighted the first time they are used in each section. Exceptions to this are where we think it may be particularly useful for you to check a word or phrase.
- Information on where to find more advice and support.

## ***What this guide means by particular words***

- 'Service provider': a parliament or a politician.
- 'Services': goods and facilities as well as services, and **public functions**.
- 'Service user': you, or anyone else who is using services. It includes someone who wants to use services (for example, someone who is stopped or put off using a service by **unlawful discrimination**).
- 'Political party': any group which is registered in Great Britain under Part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Electoral Commission keeps a list of these parties.
- 'Member': someone who has joined a political party. A 'prospective member' is someone who is not currently a member but is actively trying to become one or would be eligible to join.
- 'Associate member': someone who is a member of another organisation, membership of which gives them some or all of the rights of a member of the political party. A person cannot be a 'prospective associate member' because they are automatically an associate member by virtue of their membership of another association.
- A 'guest': someone who is invited by the political party or one of its members to enjoy or participate in some activity of the political party. A 'prospective guest' is someone who is likely to become a guest, is trying to become one or would be one if it were not for unlawful discrimination by the political party.

## *The Human Rights Act 1998*

When you are receiving services from a public sector organisation or others who deliver services for them or carry out public functions on their behalf, you may have rights under the Human Rights Act 1998.

You can contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission to find out more about the Human Rights Act.

**Note:** political parties are not public sector organisations, so this does not apply to what they do.

## *How equality law applies to the United Kingdom Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales*

Equality law does not apply to what the law calls 'a function of the UK Parliament or exercisable in connection with the official business of the UK Parliament'.

This includes:

- how it is run
- anything that is essential to what the UK Parliament does
- any of its:
  - debates or questions or other discussions
  - committee hearings or reports, or
  - publications.

Equality law does not apply to any steps in the law-making process in Parliament, the Scottish Parliament or the National Assembly for Wales, including:

- preparing, making or considering an **Act** or a **Bill** for an Act, and
- preparing, making, confirming, approving or considering **regulations**.

So you could not bring a claim for **unlawful discrimination** against a Member of Parliament (MP), member of the House of Lords (peer), Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) or Assembly Member (AM) or an official for something they did or failed to do in connection with official business, or in connection with laws being made.

However, in other situations, for example, when you visit the building where the Parliament or Assembly takes place, or when the Parliament or Assembly provides you with information, equality law does apply.

In these situations, the Parliament or Assembly and the people who work for it or do things on its behalf must avoid unlawful discrimination.

## ***How equality law applies to politicians***

Politicians, such as Members of Parliament (MPs), members of the House of Lords (peers), Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), Members of the National Assembly for Wales (AMs), county councillors, city councillors, district councillors, local authority councillors, community councillors and borough councillors are, in some circumstances, providing a service to people or carrying out public functions.

For example:

When a politician holds a 'surgery' to give people a chance to make a complaint about a service or to raise a concern about a local problem, or when they answer a letter or an email.

In these situations, the politician and the people who work for them or do things on their behalf must avoid unlawful discrimination.

## ***How equality law applies to political parties***

Political parties must avoid unlawful discrimination in how they operate and the activities they do.

The law applies to parties at a national, regional, constituency and local level and to people working for them or making decisions about the party's membership and activities.

This part of this guide tells you about:

- Joining and belonging to a political party
- Reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people
- Positive action in the selection of candidates
- Collection of information about candidates' protected characteristics

## Joining and belonging to a political party

A political party must not:

- refuse membership to you as a prospective member or grant membership to you on less favourable terms because of a protected characteristic.
- offer membership terms, benefits and services that are discriminatory, whether that is **direct discrimination** or **indirect discrimination**.

For example:

A political party refuses to accept someone's application for membership because they are Jewish. This would be direct discrimination because of the person's race and/or religion or belief.

If the party accepted the person's membership, but charged them a higher membership rate or gave them fewer benefits of belonging, then this would also be direct discrimination because of race and/or religion or belief.

If the party imposed a condition on the person which is harder for them to comply with because of their race or their religion or belief, such as:

- that in order to become a member, they had to attend a set number of meetings, all of which take place during the Jewish Sabbath,

then this would be indirect discrimination because of race and/or religion or belief discrimination unless the party could show that the condition is **objectively justified**.

This would also be the case if, rather than becoming a member, the attendance at the meetings was a condition of holding office or seeking selection to stand as a candidate for the party.

This includes activities that are directly related to political activity, such as being allowed to campaign on behalf of a political party, and those that are not.

For example:

- The officer of a local political party tells a member who is gay that the party does not want them to campaign on its behalf by knocking on doors gathering people's views. This would probably be direct discrimination because of sexual orientation. It does not matter whether the officer's motive is to try to protect the member from abuse they fear the member might experience, or because they think that voters would be less likely to support the party because of meeting a gay member. Direct discrimination cannot be justified.
- A political party is holding its annual dinner. The partners of members are also invited to the dinner as guests of the party. The partner of one member is known to be a transsexual person and they are not invited to the dinner. This is likely to be direct discrimination because of gender reassignment.

It also applies to the basis on which the political party is established. A political party could not be set up with a requirement that every member must have a particular protected characteristic. People who did not have that protected characteristic would be able to bring a claim for direct discrimination.

## **Reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people**

If you are a disabled person and are a member, associate member or guest (or a prospective member or guest), the political party must make **reasonable adjustments** in its joining processes and in how you access its services.

The aim of reasonable adjustments is to make sure that disabled people are able to join a political party or use its services as far as is reasonable to the same standard as non-disabled people.

A political party cannot wait until a disabled person wants to join it or use its services, but must think in advance about what people with a range of impairments might reasonably need, such as people who have a visual impairment, a hearing impairment, a mobility impairment or a learning disability.

If it is the **physical features** of a building the political party occupies or is using that put disabled people at a substantial disadvantage, the party must either:

- make reasonable adjustments to avoid the disadvantage, or
- find a reasonable alternative way of providing members, associate members and guests (and prospective members and guests) with the same access to membership and to its services.

Where meetings take place in a member's or associate member's home, then reasonable adjustments do not have to be made to **physical features** to make it accessible for a member who is a disabled person and for whom the physical features of the meeting place present a barrier to their attending the meeting.

But it may be a reasonable adjustment to hold the meeting at an **accessible venue**.

For example:

The local branch of a political party holds its meetings in a hired room upstairs in a local pub. There is no lift, but two flights of stairs. A party member who is a wheelchair user is not able to participate in the meetings. He asks that the meetings be held at a venue with level access like a community hall. The change is likely to be seen as a reasonable adjustment.

Even if this is not a reasonable adjustment taking into account all the circumstances of the party, such as its size and resources, it may want to consider whether as a matter of good practice it should change where it meets to an accessible venue.

Reasonable adjustments are not just about physical accessibility, although this is important for some disabled people, but can be about the conditions that are put on membership or the way in which services are offered.

For example:

A local branch of a political party has one member who is blind and two who cannot easily read standard size print because they have a visual impairment. It must think about how it provides information about meetings and activities to these members, for example, by providing electronic, large print and/or audio versions of the monthly newsletter and meeting agenda. Providing information in **alternative formats** is in most situations likely to be a reasonable adjustment.

## Positive action in the selection of candidates

Equality law allows a political party to:

- make arrangements to control the selection of its candidates for an election, and
- take action to carry out those arrangements

where the purpose of the arrangements is to address the under-representation of people who share one or more of the protected characteristics of:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- race
- sex, or
- sexual orientation

in the party's elected representatives in the following bodies:

- the UK Parliament
- the European Parliament
- the Scottish Parliament
- the National Assembly for Wales
- local government.
  - For local government, the under-representation must be in the party's elected representatives to the particular council for which selections and elections are taking place.

For example:

A political group on a county council is made up of 20 per cent women and 80 per cent men. The political party could put in place positive action measures, because women are under-represented compared to the population as a whole, which is 51 per cent female.

If the political group was 80 per cent women and 20 per cent men, the party could not use positive action measures to increase the representation of women on the county council. It could, however, use positive action measures to address the under-representation of men.



These arrangements are known as positive action.

The use of positive action by political parties is voluntary, not something they can be made to do.

For example:

A person who wants to be a candidate and believes they would benefit from positive action cannot bring a claim for unlawful discrimination just because a party refuses to use positive action.

Changes to selection arrangements can include steps the party takes to:

- encourage prospective candidates with a particular protected characteristic to come forward, for example, by holding an event just for them or writing just to members who share the under-represented protected characteristic
- increase candidates' prospects of being selected, for example, by giving public speaking training only to people with the under-represented protected characteristic
- identify suitable candidates, for example, by reducing the time people with the under-represented protected characteristic have to have been party members to be allowed to stand for election, or
- decide how a final shortlist will be chosen, for example, by reserving places on a shortlist for people with the under-represented protected characteristic, or having a shortlist made up only of people who share the under-represented protected characteristic, although this only applies to disability and sex (this is explained below).

If a political party decides to use positive action, it must show that what it intends to do:

- will address the under-representation of its elected representatives:
  - with the particular protected characteristic or characteristics in relation to which it is taking the positive action
  - in the particular body for election to which it is selecting its candidates, and
- is **proportionate**.

As long as the party can show this, then someone who wants to be a candidate in the election would not be able to claim that they had been unlawfully discriminated against just because their chance of selection has been reduced or removed because they do not have the under-represented protected characteristic.

However, this does not stop a person who wants to be a candidate challenging unlawful discrimination because they believe they have been discriminated against because of protected characteristics which are not the focus of the positive action.

For example:

A political party looks at the proportion of people with different protected characteristics representing the party on a local council. It sees that it has no councillors of Chinese origin, despite there being a large local Chinese population and a significant number of party members from that population. It decides to reserve half the places on the shortlist in the electoral area with the highest population of people of Chinese origin for people of that origin. A senior figure in the party writes to all the members known to be of Chinese origin and invites them to seek selection.

A party member who is not of Chinese origin and wants to stand for election complains of race discrimination when she is not shortlisted. She will not succeed, provided the party can show that the steps it has taken are lawful, in other words that they genuinely address under-representation and are proportionate.

However, if the party member believed she had been discriminated against because of her sex, for example, because she had been asked questions about her plans for having children at an interview which would be deciding who to shortlist, she would still be able to challenge this alleged sex discrimination.

## Shortlists

One positive action step a political party can take is to reserve a fixed number of places on their candidate shortlists for people who share the under-represented protected characteristic which is being targeted.

However, a shortlist cannot be made up only of people with a protected characteristic, except in relation to sex and disability.

Shortlists entirely made up of the under-represented sex are allowed until 31 December 2030. In practice, that means 'women-only' or 'all-women' shortlists (although if before that date one of the bodies to which these positive action provisions apply did have under-representation by men representing a particular political party, it could mean a 'men-only' shortlist).

A shortlist made up only of disabled people would be allowed as well, because of the exception in equality law which allows disabled people to be treated more favourably than non-disabled people. The aim of the law in allowing more favourable treatment for disabled people is to remove barriers that disabled people would otherwise face to participating in activities.

## **Collection of information about candidates' protected characteristics**

It is possible that in the future, political parties will be required to collect and publish information about the protected characteristics of people standing as candidates.

If this happens, this guide will be updated.

At the moment, political parties are allowed to collect and publish this information, but they do not have to. This is often called monitoring. You can read more about it in the list of words and key ideas.

If a political party asks you about your protected characteristics, you do not have to answer its questions.

## **What equality law says people and organisations providing services or running a political party must do**

### ***Protected characteristics***

Make sure you know what is meant by:

age (this is not a protected characteristic in relation to parliaments and politicians, but is in relation to political parties)

- **disability**
- **gender reassignment**
- **pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding)**
- **race**
- **religion or belief**
- **sex**
- **sexual orientation.**

Then you will know how you fit into each of these **protected characteristics**.

## Unlawful discrimination

Unlawful discrimination, in other words, treating some people **worse** than others because of a protected characteristic, can take a number of different forms:

- A service provider or political party must not treat you worse than someone else just because of one or more of your protected characteristics (this is called **direct discrimination**).

For example:

A political party refuses to let you join it because of your ethnic origin.

- A service provider or political party must not do something to you in a way that has a worse impact on you and other people who share a particular protected characteristic than it has on people who do not share that characteristic. Unless the service provider or political party can show that what they have done is **objectively justified**, this will be what is called **indirect discrimination**. 'Doing something' can include making a decision, or applying a rule or way of doing things.

For example:

- A politician refuses to allow anyone to attend a meeting who is wearing a hat or other headgear. If this rule is applied in exactly the same way to everyone, Sikhs, Jews, Muslims and Rastafarians who may cover their heads as part of their religion will not be allowed into the meeting. Unless the politician can **objectively justify** what they have done, this will be indirect discrimination.
- While anyone can see the UK Parliament at work for free, overseas visitors are required to pay for tours, and these paid-for tours are only available during the summer when Parliament is not sitting. Although this has a worse impact (requiring payment, and not being able to have a tour at any time of year) on the overseas visitors because of their national origin (which is an aspect of their race), the **objective justification** for what has been done is that UK residents are directly affected by what the parliament does, and this means it is appropriate for them to get an enhanced service (free tours at any time of year via a request to an MP or member of the House of Lords). This will therefore not be indirect discrimination.

- If you are a **disabled person**, a service provider or political party must not treat you **unfavourably** because of something connected to your disability where they cannot show that what they are doing is **objectively justified**. This only applies if the organisation knew or could **reasonably** have been expected to know that you are a disabled person. This is called **discrimination arising from disability**.

For example:

A 'no dogs allowed' rule in a parliament building would disadvantage a disabled person with a visual impairment who uses an assistance dog. The unfavourable treatment – stopping the disabled person entering the building – is because of something that is connected to their disability (the use of the assistance dog). Unless the parliament can show that the exclusion of the dog is **objectively justified**, this is likely to be discrimination arising from disability.

- A service provider or political party must not treat you worse than someone else because you are **associated with** a person who has a protected characteristic.

For example:

A political party excludes a white member from a party event because they have brought a black guest with them. The white member would almost certainly be able to make a claim for unlawful race discrimination based on their association with the black guest, who has also been directly discriminated against because of their race.

- A service provider or political party must not treat you worse because they incorrectly think you have a protected characteristic (**perception**).

For example:

A political party incorrectly believes that someone who wants to join is gay and refuses to give them membership. This is almost certainly unlawful discrimination because of sexual orientation.

- A service provider or political party must not treat you badly or **victimise** you because you have complained about discrimination or helped someone else complain or done anything to uphold your own or someone else's equality law rights.

For example:

A disabled person who is a wheelchair user complains to a political party's national office that the local party holds its meetings and social events in a venue which is inaccessible to them, usually the upstairs function room at a pub, where there is no lift. The local party stops sending them information about future meetings and events. This is likely to be victimisation.

- A service provider or political party must not **harass** you.

For example:

A member of a politician's staff makes persistent and inappropriate comments to a female constituent about her physical appearance when she comes to ask the politician to help sort out her benefits claim. The constituent feels very uncomfortable and threatened. This would almost certainly be **sexual harassment**. A local political party officer is verbally abusive to a member in relation to a protected characteristic.

**Note:** Even where the behaviour does not come within the equality law definition of harassment (for example, because it is related to religion or belief or sexual orientation), it is likely still to be **unlawful discrimination** because the service provider or political party is giving the service to you on worse terms than it would give someone who did not have the same protected characteristic.

- In addition, to make sure that, if you are a disabled person, you can use services or belong to (or be a guest of) a political party as far as is reasonable to the same standard or on the same terms as a non-disabled person, the service provider or political party must make **reasonable adjustments**.

The service provider or political party is not allowed to wait until you or another disabled person want to use its services or join it, but must think in advance about what people with a range of **impairments** might reasonably need, such as people who have a visual impairment, a hearing impairment, a mobility impairment or a learning disability.

For example:

- The education and information offices at the UK Parliament, Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales make information about the Parliament or Assembly available in a range of **alternative formats**. Their websites are designed to be accessible to people with a range of disabilities, using variable font sizes, alternative text where graphics are used, and key strokes rather than a mouse. These are reasonable adjustments that have been made to make sure that the same information is available to everyone.
- A politician arranges a surgery in an upstairs room at a community centre. A disabled person with a mobility impairment who uses two sticks to walk cannot climb the stairs and there is no lift. It is likely to be a reasonable adjustment for the politician or their staff to have booked a venue with level access, as it could reasonably have been anticipated that disabled people with a range of impairments would need to access the surgery. Other reasonable adjustments might be to:
  - provide information in a range of alternative formats (this will almost always be a reasonable adjustment),
  - make sure that there are clear signs at the place where the surgery is being held showing the way to the room where it is taking place.
- A political party buys a portable induction loop to encourage members who have a hearing impairment and use hearing aids to attend meetings and take part in discussions.

You can read more about reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people in Chapter 4.

## What does this mean for how services are delivered?

Because of a protected characteristic, a service provider:

- Must not refuse to serve you or refuse to take you on as a service user.

For example:

A politician refuses to answer a constituent's letter asking for help because of their race.

- Must not stop serving or working for you if they still serve or work for other service users who do not have the same protected characteristic.

For example:

A member of a politician's staff stops answering emails from a constituent who is a disabled person when it becomes clear that the problem the constituent is asking for help with is to do with the constituent's use of mental health services.

- Must not give you a service of a worse quality or in a worse way than they would usually provide the service.

For example:

A guide at a parliament shortens the tour they are giving from its usual length and route when they realise that the group includes a transsexual person.

- Must not give you worse terms of service than they would normally offer.

For example:

By charging more for a service that is paid for.

- Must not put you at any other disadvantage.

For example:

A politician must not make it harder for someone to access their services.



## More favourable treatment for disabled people

Equality law allows a service provider or a political party to treat disabled people more favourably than non-disabled people. The aim of the law in allowing this is to remove barriers that disabled people would otherwise face to accessing services.

For example:

A parliament offers a reduced rate to disabled people who buy tickets for tours of the building.

## Positive action

A service provider or political party is allowed to target what it does at people with a particular protected characteristic through **positive action**. The service provider must be able to show that the protected characteristic these people share means they have a different need or a past track record of disadvantage or low participation in the sort of activities the organisation runs. If a service provider is thinking about taking positive action, it must go through a number of steps to decide whether positive action is needed and what sort of action to take. You can read more about this:

- as it applies to organisations generally in the list of words and key ideas.
- as it applies to political parties, and in particular to choosing candidates to stand for election

## Is the way I've been treated unlawful discrimination?

Remember, a parliament or politician may refuse you a service or offer you a different service because of a judgment about your needs as a service user. Or a political party may refuse you membership for a reason other than a protected characteristic.

For example:

- A person asks an elected representative for help with a problem. When the representative checks where the person lives, they realise that the person is not their constituent. They refuse to help them but give them contact details of the representative in whose area the person actually lives. This is not unlawful discrimination as the refusal of the service is not because of a protected characteristic.
- A political party refuses to allow someone to join because they were a vocal supporter of another party at a recent election, and the party is not satisfied that their views have changed since. This is not unlawful discrimination as the refusal of membership is not because of a protected characteristic.

The important question is whether what the service provider or political party has done is different because of an assessment of your needs as a service user or for a reason other than your protected characteristics. Or whether it comes within the definition of unlawful discrimination which is explained in the list at words and key ideas.

The reason for the way the service provider or political party has acted will probably be important:

- Did they do something because of a protected characteristic which:
  - is yours, or
  - belongs to someone you are **associated with**, or
  - is a protected characteristic they incorrectly thought you had?
- Or has what they have done had a worse impact on you and other people with the same protected characteristic? Can they **objectively justify** their actions?
- Or if you are a disabled person, have you been treated badly because of something connected to (or as the law puts it, arising from) your disability? Or has the service provider or political party failed to make reasonable adjustments?
- Or does what they have done come within any of the exceptions which are explained later in this guide?
- If you believe that what they did was **harassment**, does it relate to a protected characteristic?
- If you believe you have been **victimised**, what was the previous action to uphold your own or someone else's equality law rights that has led to your worse treatment now?

If you want help in working out if the service provider or political party is acting within equality law, or to complain about what it has done, you can read more about how to do this in Chapter 5: *What to do if you think you've been discriminated against*.

## Standards of behaviour

A service provider or political party can still tell you what standards of behaviour they want from you as a service user, member, associate or guest. For example, behaving with respect towards their staff and to other service users, members, associates and guests.

Sometimes, how someone behaves may be linked to a protected characteristic.

If a service provider or political party sets standards of behaviour for their service users, members, associate members or guests which have a worse impact on people with a particular protected characteristic than on people who do not have that characteristic, they need to make sure that they can **objectively justify** what they have done. Otherwise, it will be indirect discrimination.

If they do set standards of behaviour, they must make reasonable adjustments to the standards for disabled people and avoid discrimination arising from disability. You can read more about reasonable adjustments in Chapter 4.

## 2. What equality law says about delivering services: staff, places, advertisements and marketing, written materials, websites, telephone services and call centres

When a person or organisation is providing you with **goods, facilities** or **services**, the way they deliver their services to you matters.

This is true whether you are dealing with a business, a public sector organisation, a voluntary or community sector organisation, or an association or club.

People and organisations providing services, including goods and facilities, (**service providers**) must make sure that they do what equality law says they must in relation to:

- the behaviour of staff who are dealing with you as a **customer, client, service user, club member, associate member** or **guest**, or who are taking decisions about how they provide their goods, facilities or services to the public
- the building or other place where the services are delivered, if this is open to the public or a section of the public
- advertisements and marketing
- written materials, for example, information leaflets the person or organisation provide as part of their service
- websites and internet services
- telephone access and call centres.

## Staff behaviour

How people who work for a service provider behave towards you in relation to your **protected characteristics** is very important. Often what staff do (or don't do) will make a difference to whether they deliver services to you without **unlawful discrimination**, **harassment** or **victimisation** and whether they make **reasonable adjustments** for you if you are a disabled person.

This does not just apply to situations where people are dealing directly with you, but also to how they plan their services.

When someone is planning services, they might make a decision, apply a rule or work out a way of doing things which will affect how you access their services. If this has a worse impact on you and other people with a particular protected characteristic than on people who do not share that characteristic, then it will be **indirect discrimination** unless they are able to **objectively justify** the decision, rule or way of doing things.

Equality law does not say exactly how an organisation should tell staff how to behave to avoid unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. But it is clear that an organisation that does not bother to do this risks being held legally responsible by a court for unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out by its staff.

### Equality good practice: what to look for

If equality matters to you, look out for organisations who tell you about their **equality policy** and the **equality training** they give their staff, or other ways they set standards for their staff to meet so that they do not discriminate against customers, clients, service users, members or guests.

The rest of this guide tells you more about the standards you can expect in particular situations or when dealing with a particular type of service provider.

You can read more about what to do if you believe you've been discriminated against in Chapter 5.

# The building or other place where services are delivered

Often you will use services by going to a particular place, such as a building or an open air venue.

If their building or other place where they deliver services is open to the public or a section of the public, a service provider must make sure that:

- you are not unlawfully discriminated against
- you are not harassed or victimised in using their premises, and
- they make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

In making reasonable adjustments, a service provider is not allowed to wait until a disabled person wants to use their services. They must think in advance about what people with a range of impairments might reasonably need. If they have not done this and a disabled person wants to use a service, then the service provider must make the reasonable adjustments as quickly as possible.

Service providers have to think about every aspect of their building or other premises, including:

- how people enter
- how they find their way around
- what signs they provide
- how people communicate with staff
- information they provide
- queuing systems, if they have them
- counters and checkouts, if they have them
- accessible toilet facilities.

You can read more about reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people in Chapter 4.

# Advertisements and marketing

An advertisement includes every form of advertisement or notice or marketing material, whether aimed at members of the public or a specialised audience, including:

- in a newspaper or other publication
- by television or radio
- by display of notices
- signs
- labels
- show-cards or goods
- by distribution of samples
- circulars
- catalogues
- price lists or other material
- by exhibition of pictures
- three-dimensional models or filmed material.

Most written and other material published by a service provider is likely to count as an advertisement if its aim is to tell customers or service users about a service.

A service provider is allowed to target advertising material at a particular group of people, including a group who share a particular protected characteristic.

For example:

- A mortgage company advertises a product as particularly suitable for women by advertising that borrowers can take payment holidays if they take maternity leave.
- A bar advertises in a newspaper mostly bought by lesbian or gay women and gay men.
- A barber has flyers printed only advertising haircuts and listing prices for men.
- A community organisation makes it clear on its website that the lunch club it runs is aimed at older people from a particular ethnic background.
- A sporting club advertises that particular sessions are targeted at introducing disabled people to its sport.

But, unless services are covered by one of the exceptions to equality law (which you will find at page 17), an advertisement must not tell you that, because of a particular protected characteristic, you cannot use the service or would not be welcome to use the service, or would receive worse terms in using the service.

For example:

- If someone advertising a service (for example, by putting a notice in a shop window) makes it clear in the advert that people from a particular ethnic group are not welcome as customers, this would amount to **direct discrimination** because of race against people who might have considered using the service but are deterred from doing so because of the advertisement.
- A flyer for a nightclub offering women free admission while men are charged for entry would probably be unlawful.
- An advertisement that said 'unsuitable for disabled people' would probably be unlawful.



However, a service provider does not have to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in advertising its services.

For example:

If a business advertises in a newspaper, it does not have to put out an equivalent advertisement on the radio just because disabled people with a visual impairment may not have been able to read the written advertisement.

### Equality good practice: what to look for

Even though organisations do not have to make reasonable adjustments when they are advertising their services, they can do this if they want to, for example, by advertising in ways that will be accessible to disabled people with a range of impairments, such as providing Easy Read information for people with a learning disability.

## Written information

When a service includes providing written information, a service provider must not unlawfully discriminate against, harass or victimise you because of a protected characteristic in:

- what the information itself says
- the way it is provided.

When written information is part of a service, a service provider must think about providing it in **alternative formats**, such as in Braille, on CD, or electronically, for disabled people who need the information in this form. This is likely to be a reasonable adjustment, although what is reasonable depends on the service provider's circumstances. If providing the information in alternative formats is a reasonable adjustment, then the service provider must do it.

In making reasonable adjustments, a service provider is not allowed to wait until a disabled person wants to use their services. They must think in advance about what people with a range of impairments might reasonably need. If they have not done this and a disabled person wants to use a service, then the service provider must make the reasonable adjustments as quickly as possible.

For example:

- A café whose menu does not often change provides menus in Braille and large print so that customers with different visual impairments can independently use the menu.
- A restaurant changes its menus daily. Because of this, it considers that it is not practicable to provide menus in alternative formats, such as Braille. However, its staff spend a little time reading aloud the menu for blind customers, and the restaurant ensures that there is a large-print copy available.
- A community organisation providing health advice produces its leaflets in a range of alternative formats.

You can read more about reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people in Chapter 4.

## Websites and internet services

If someone provides services through a website – such as online shopping, direct marketing or advertising – they are known as an **Information Society Service Provider (ISSP)**.

This applies if they have a one-page website which they maintain themselves. It also applies if they have a very sophisticated website maintained by a professional web design company. And it applies to anything in between.

If you believe that you have been unlawfully discriminated against by an ISSP, and the ISSP is established in the UK, you can bring a claim in the UK courts against the UK-based ISSP. You do not have to be in the UK, so long as you are in a European Economic Area (EEA) member state.

An ISSP must make sure:

- That it does not allow **discriminatory** advertisements and information to appear on its website (whatever the advertisement is for).

For example:

A local newspaper accepts an advertisement which says that jobs at a particular company are only open to people of a particular ethnic or national origin. The newspaper puts it on its website. The advertisement directly discriminates because of race, and the newspaper as well as the advertiser may be liable for discrimination: the advertiser as an **employer** and the newspaper as an ISSP.

- That it does not accept requests for the placing of information that unlawfully discriminates against people because of a protected characteristic in using a service.

For example:

An online holiday company established in the UK refuses to take bookings for shared accommodation from same-sex couples. A lesbian or gay couple could bring a claim for direct discrimination because of sexual orientation in the British courts regardless of whether the couple were in the UK or another EEA member state.

- That it makes reasonable adjustments to make sure that its website is accessible to disabled people.

## ***Reasonable adjustments***

Where this is a reasonable adjustment (and, as with other written information, it is likely to be), a website must be accessible to all users – this will include, for example:

- people with visual impairments, who use text-to-speech software
- people with manual dexterity impairments, who cannot use a mouse
- people with dyslexia and learning difficulties.

In making reasonable adjustments, a service provider is not allowed to wait until a disabled person wants to use their services. They must think in advance about what people with a range of impairments might reasonably need. If they have not done this and a disabled person wants to use a service, then the service provider must make the reasonable adjustments as quickly as possible.

If you want to know more about how service providers can make their websites accessible for disabled people with a range of impairments, the Royal National Institute of Blind People provides information at:

[http://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/webaccessibility/Pages/web\\_accessibility.aspx](http://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/webaccessibility/Pages/web_accessibility.aspx)

You can read more about reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people in Chapter 4.

### **Equality good practice: what to look for**

Even if, in an organisation's particular circumstances, it is not a reasonable adjustment for it to make its website fully accessible to as many people as possible, an organisation can choose to do this.

## **Exceptions**

Where a service provider only has a limited role, it is excused the responsibilities of an **ISSP**. An example of this is if it is only temporarily storing information, and does not start sending it, decide who to send it to or change the information it is sending. This covers, for example, websites that temporarily transmit or store messages between users.

If an ISSP is not based in the UK, then the laws of the country where it is based will apply to it, rather than UK equality law.

For example:

An online retailer, which provides tickets to major sporting events, offers discounts to large groups of men but not women when booking hospitality packages for a football tournament. The online retailer is established in Germany so in this instance a case of direct discrimination because of sex would have to be brought in the German courts regardless of whether the person complaining was in the UK or another EEA member state.

# Telephone access and call centres

A service provider may provide services over the telephone as a main activity – for example, you phone up to buy something. Or it may have a telephone service as part of its service, for example, if you use telephone banking, or phone enquiry lines via a call centre.

When a service provider offers telephone information as part of its service, it must not unlawfully discriminate against, harass or victimise you because of a protected characteristic in:

- what is said to you during a call, and
- the way the service is provided.

When a service provider offers services over the telephone, it must make reasonable adjustments for disabled people who would otherwise face a barrier to accessing the service. If it is a reasonable adjustment to provide the service in a different way, then it must do it.

In making reasonable adjustments, a service provider is not allowed to wait until a disabled person wants to use their services. They must think in advance about what people with a range of impairments might reasonably need. If they have not done this and a disabled person wants to use a service, then the service provider must make the reasonable adjustments as quickly as possible.

For example:

- A call centre makes sure that it has a **textphone** to accept calls from people with a hearing impairment, as well as allowing calls to be made through a third-party interpreter.
- A community organisation offers 'live chat' with its helpline via the internet.
- A small business which offers goods for sale by phone includes an email address and mobile phone number for SMS text messaging in its marketing information and makes it clear that orders will be accepted by these methods as well as by a landline phone.

# 3. When a service provider is responsible for what other people do

It is not just the people in charge of organisations providing **goods, facilities** or **services** to the public or carrying out **public functions** who must avoid **unlawful discrimination, harassment** and **victimisation**.

If another person who is:

- employed by a service provider, or
- carrying out a service provider's instructions (who the law calls the service provider's agent)

does something that is unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation, the service provider can be held legally responsible for what they have done.

This part of the guide explains:

- When a service provider can be held legally responsible for someone else's unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- How a service provider can reduce the risk that they will be held legally responsible.
- When a service provider's employees or agents may be personally liable.
- What happens if a person instructs someone else to do something that is against equality law.
- What happens if a person helps someone else to do something that is against equality law.
- What happens if a service provider tries to stop equality law applying to a situation.

# When a service provider can be held legally responsible for someone else's unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation

A service provider is legally responsible for acts of discrimination, harassment and victimisation carried out by their employees in the course of their employment.

A service provider will also be legally responsible as the 'principal' for the acts of their agents done with their authority. Their agent is someone a service provider has instructed to do something on their behalf, even if they do not have a formal contract with them.

As long as:

- the employee was acting in the course of their employment – in other words, while they were doing their job, or
- the agent was acting within the general scope of their principal's authority – in other words, while they were carrying out your employer's instructions

it does not matter whether or not the service provider:

- knew about, or
- approved of

what their employee or agent did.

For example:

- A shop assistant bars someone they know to be gay from the shop where they work because they are prejudiced against gay people. The person who has been barred can bring a case in court for unlawful discrimination because of sexual orientation against both the shop assistant and the person or company that owns the shop.
- A community organisation hires a consultant to devise a new plan for how the organisation delivers its services. The effect of the plan is to stop some people with a particular protected characteristic accessing its services. A service user with that characteristic complains of unlawful **indirect discrimination**, saying that the new approach has a worse impact on them and other people who share the protected characteristic. The organisation is unable to **objectively justify** the approach. The consultant who made the decision which has resulted in indirect discrimination would be liable, as would the principal (in this case the organisation), which would be liable for what their agent (the consultant) has done.

However, a service provider will not be held legally responsible if they can show that:

- they took **all reasonable steps** to stop an employee acting unlawfully.
- an agent acted outside the scope of their authority (in other words, that they did something so different from what the service provider asked them to do that they could no longer be thought of as acting on the service provider's behalf).

## How a service provider can reduce the risk that they will be held legally responsible

A service provider can reduce the risk that they will be held legally responsible for the behaviour of their employees or agents if they tell them how to behave so that they avoid unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

This does not just apply to situations where a service provider and their staff are dealing face-to-face with you, but also to how they plan their services.

When a service provider is planning their services, they need to make sure that their decisions, rules or ways of doing things are not:

- **direct discrimination**, or
- **indirect discrimination** that they cannot **objectively justify**, or
- **discrimination arising from disability** that they cannot **objectively justify**, or
- **harassment**

and that they have made **reasonable adjustments** for disabled people, which you can read more about in Chapter 4.



## When a service provider's employees or agents may be personally liable

An employee or agent may be personally responsible for their own acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out during their employment or while acting with their principal's authority. This applies where either:

- the service provider is also liable as their employer or principal, or
- the service provider would be responsible but they show that:
  - they took **all reasonable steps** to prevent their employee discriminating against, harassing or victimising you, or
  - their agent acted outside the scope of their authority.

For example:

- Unknown to their employer, the receptionist in an estate agent refuses to give details of houses for rent to a client with a mental health condition. The estate agent has issued clear instructions to its staff about their obligations under equality law, has provided equality training, and regularly checks that staff are complying with the law. It is likely that the receptionist has acted unlawfully but that their employer will have a defence.
- A community organisation hires a consultant to devise a new plan for how the organisation delivers its services. The effect of the plan is to stop some people with a particular protected characteristic accessing its services. A service user with that characteristic complains of unlawful **indirect discrimination**, saying that the new approach has a worse impact on them and other people who share the protected characteristic. The organisation is unable to **objectively justify** the approach. The consultant who made the decision which has resulted in indirect discrimination would be liable, as would the principal (in this case the organisation), which would be liable for what their agent (the consultant) has done, unless the organisation can show that the consultant had exceeded the scope of their authority, for example, because the organisation explicitly told the consultant that they must meet the requirements of equality law.

But there is an exception to this. An employee or agent will *not* be responsible if their employer or principal has told them that there is nothing wrong with what they are doing and the employee or agent **reasonably** believes this to be true.

It is a criminal offence, punishable by a fine, for an employer or principal to make a false statement which an employee or agent relies upon to carry out an unlawful act.

## **What happens if a person instructs someone else to do something that is against equality law**

An employer or principal must not instruct, cause or induce their employee or agent to discriminate against, harass or victimise another person, or to attempt to do so.

'Causing' or 'inducing' someone to do something can include situations where someone is made to do something or persuaded to do it, even if they were not directly instructed to do it.

Both:

- the person who receives the instruction or is caused or induced to discriminate against, harass or victimise, and
- the person who is on the receiving end of the discrimination, harassment or victimisation

have a claim against the person giving the instructions if they suffer loss or harm as a result of the instructing or causing or inducing of the discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

This applies whether or not the instruction is actually carried out.

## What happens if a person helps someone else to do something that is against equality law

A person must not help someone else carry out an act which the person helping knows is unlawful under equality law.

However, if the person helping has been told by the person they help that the act is lawful and he or she **reasonably** believes this to be true, he or she will not be legally responsible.

It is a criminal offence, punishable by a fine, to make a false statement which another person relies on to help to carry out an unlawful act.

## What happens if a service provider tries to stop equality law applying to a situation

A service provider cannot stop equality law applying to a situation if it does in fact apply. For example, there is no point in a service provider making a statement in a contract with a customer, client or service user that equality law does not apply. The statement will not have any legal effect. That is, it will not be possible for the service provider to enforce or rely on a term in a contract that tries to do this. This is the case even if the other person has stated they have understood the term and/or they have agreed to it.

For example:

A business gives a client a written contract to sign which includes a term saying that they cannot bring a claim under the Equality Act 2010. The business withdraws the service in circumstances which amount to unlawful discrimination. The term in the contract does not stop the client bringing a claim in court.

## 4. The duty to make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people

Equality law recognises that bringing about equality for disabled people may mean changing the way in which services are delivered, providing extra equipment and/or the removal of **physical barriers**.

This is the '**duty to make reasonable adjustments**'. A duty is something someone must do, in this case because the law says they must.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that if you are a disabled person, you can use an organisation's services as close as it is reasonably possible to get to the standard usually offered to non-disabled people.

If an organisation providing **goods**, **facilities** or **services** to the public or a section of the public, or carrying out **public functions**, or running an **association** finds there are barriers to disabled people in the way it does things, then it must consider making adjustments (in other words, changes). If those adjustments are reasonable for that organisation to make, then it must make them.

The duty is 'anticipatory'. This means an organisation cannot wait until a disabled person wants to use its services, but must think in advance (and on an ongoing basis) about what disabled people with a range of **impairments** might reasonably need, such as people who have a visual impairment, a hearing impairment, a mobility impairment or a learning disability.

An organisation is not required to do more than it is reasonable for it to do. What is reasonable for an organisation to do depends, among other factors, on its size and nature, and the nature of the goods, facilities or services it provides, or the public functions it carries out, or the association it runs.

If you are a disabled person and can show that there were barriers an organisation should have identified and reasonable adjustments it could have made, you can bring a claim against it in court. If you win your case, the organisation may be told to pay compensation and make the reasonable adjustments.

The rest of this section looks at the duty in more detail and gives examples of the sorts of adjustments organisations could make. It looks at:

- The three requirements of the duty
- Are disabled people at a substantial disadvantage?
- What is meant by 'reasonable'
- The continuing duty on organisations
- Who pays for an adjustment?
- What you can do if you think an organisation has not made reasonable adjustments
- When the duty is different
  - Associations
  - Rented premises or premises available to rent
  - Transport

## The three requirements of the duty

The duty contains three requirements that apply in situations where a disabled person would otherwise be placed at a **substantial disadvantage** compared with people who are not disabled. The duty is slightly different for associations, in relation to management of premises, and for transport services. These differences are explained at the end of this section.

For most organisations and in most situations:

- The first requirement involves changing the way things are done (equality law calls this a **provision, criterion or practice**).

An organisation may have rules or ways of doing things, whether written or unwritten, that present barriers to you as a disabled person.

They may stop you using the service altogether, or make it unreasonably difficult for you to use it.

Unless the practice can be justified, it might be reasonable for the organisation to drop it completely, or to change it so that it no longer has that effect.

For example:

- A private club has a policy of refusing entry during the evening to male members who do not wear a shirt and tie. A disabled member who wishes to attend in the evening is unable to wear a tie because he has psoriasis (a severe skin complaint) of the face and neck. Unless the club is prepared to change its policy at least for this member, its effect is to exclude the disabled member from the club. This is likely to be an unlawful failure to make a reasonable adjustment.
- A shop receives feedback from a customer with facial scars from severe burns that the ways in which its staff interact with her have made her feel uncomfortable and failed to provide a helpful service. The retailer decides to introduce disability awareness training, with a particular emphasis on issues around disfigurement, to improve the customer service of its staff. This is likely to be a reasonable adjustment to make.

- The second requirement involves making changes to overcome barriers created by the **physical features** of an organisation's premises, if these are open to the public or a section of the public.

Where a physical feature puts disabled people using a service at substantial disadvantage, an organisation must take reasonable steps to:

- remove the feature
- alter it so that it no longer has that effect
- provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature, or
- provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service available to disabled people.

It is better for an organisation to look at removing or altering the physical feature or finding a way of avoiding it (such as replacing steps with a ramp or, if it is reasonable for it to do this, a lift) before it looks at providing an alternative service. An alternative service may not give you a similar level of service.

Exactly what kind of changes are needed will depend on the kind of barriers the premises present. An organisation needs to look at the whole of the premises that are open to the public or a section of the public, and may have to make more than one change.

For example:

- A pub improves the paths in its beer garden so that the outside space can be accessed by disabled customers with a mobility impairment or a visual impairment.
- A small shop paints its doorframe in a contrasting colour to assist customers with a visual impairment.
- A hairdressing salon moves product display stands from just inside its door to create a wider aisle which means that wheelchair users can use its services more easily.

Physical features include: steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilet and washing facilities, public facilities (such as telephones, counters or service desks), lighting and ventilation, lifts and escalators, floor coverings, signs, furniture, and temporary or movable items (such as equipment and display racks).

Physical features also include the size of premises (for example, the size of an airport where a clearly signed short route to departures might enable people with a mobility impairment to use the airport more easily, or of a shopping centre, where wheelchairs, buggies and extra staff to help shoppers find their way around are made available). This is not an exhaustive list.

- The third requirement involves providing extra aids and services like providing extra equipment or providing a different or additional service (which equality law calls **auxiliary aids** or **auxiliary services**).

An organisation must take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids or services if this would enable (or make it easier for) disabled people to make use of any of its services.

For example:

- A shop keeps a portable induction loop on its counter so conversations with staff can be heard more easily by disabled people who use hearing aids.
- A club records its handbook onto audio CD for members with a visual impairment, and sends out its newsletters by email as an audio file if members ask for this.
- An accountant offers to make a home visit to a client with a mobility impairment when usually clients would come to their premises.
- A leisure centre has a regular booking by a group of deaf people. The leisure centre makes sure that the members of staff who have had basic training in British Sign Language (BSL) are rotad to work on that day to make sure that the deaf customers get the same level of service that other people would expect.

The kind of equipment or service will depend very much on the individual disabled person and what the organisation does. However organisations may be able to think in advance about some things that will help particular groups of disabled people.



Technological solutions may be useful in overcoming communication barriers, but sometimes a person offering assistance will be what is needed.

For example:

- Asking a disabled person with a visual impairment if they would like assistance in finding goods in a shop or having information read to them.
- Taking the time to explain services to a disabled person with a learning disability.
- If someone is being asked to make a major decision, providing a disabled person who uses British Sign Language (BSL) with a BSL to English interpreter, it is reasonable for the organisation to do this.

If an organisation does provide equipment, the equipment must work and be maintained. It is also important that staff know how to use the equipment

The duty is slightly different for associations, in relation to management of premises, and for transport services. These differences are explained at the end of this section of the guide.

## Are disabled people at a substantial disadvantage?

The question for an organisation is whether:

- the way it does things
- any physical feature of its premises, or
- the absence of an auxiliary aid or service

puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled.

Anything that is more than minor or trivial is a substantial disadvantage.

If a substantial disadvantage does exist, then the duty to make reasonable adjustments applies.

The aim of the adjustments an organisation makes is to remove the substantial disadvantage.

But an organisation only has to make adjustments that are reasonable for it to make.

## What is meant by ‘reasonable’

When deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable an organisation can consider:

- how effective the change will be in assisting disabled people in general or a particular customer, client, service user or member
- whether it can actually be done
- the cost, and
- the organisation’s resources and size.

The aim of making adjustments is, as far as possible, to remove any disadvantage faced by disabled people.

An organisation can consider whether an adjustment is practicable. The easier an adjustment is, the more likely it is to be reasonable. However, just because something is difficult doesn’t mean it can’t also be reasonable. This has to be balanced against other factors.

If an adjustment costs little or nothing and is not disruptive, it would be reasonable unless some other factor (such as impracticality or lack of effectiveness) made it unreasonable.

An organisation’s size and resources are another factor. If an adjustment costs a significant amount, it is more likely to be reasonable for an organisation to make it if it has substantial financial resources. The organisation’s resources must be looked at across the whole organisation, not just the branch or section that provides the particular service.

This is an issue which has to be balanced against the other factors.

In changing policies, criteria or practices, an organisation does not have to change the basic nature of the service it offers.

For example:

- An association which exists to taste wine does not have to hold soft drink tastings when a member’s disability prevents them drinking alcohol.
- Just because some of its treatments may be unsuitable for some disabled people, such as people undergoing chemotherapy for cancer, a beauty salon does not have to stop offering certain treatments altogether.

If, having taken all of the relevant issues into account, an organisation decides an adjustment is reasonable, then it must make the adjustment.

## The continuing duty on organisations

The duty to make reasonable adjustments is a continuing duty. It is not something that needs simply to be considered once and once only, and then forgotten.

If a disabled person wants to use an organisation's services but finds barriers, then the organisation needs to think about reasonable adjustments. This applies whether or not it has already made any adjustments.

If the organisation changes what it does, the way that it does it or moves premises or makes changes to its existing premises, then it needs to review the adjustments it has made. What was originally a reasonable step to take might no longer be enough.

For example:

A large sports complex amends its 'no dogs' policy to allow entry to assistance dogs. It offers assistance dog users a tour of the complex to acquaint them with routes. This is likely to be a reasonable step for it to have to take at this stage. However, the complex then starts building work and this encroaches on paths within the complex, making it difficult for assistance dog users to negotiate their way around. Offering an initial tour is therefore no longer an effective adjustment as it does not make the complex accessible to assistance dog users. The service provider therefore decides to offer assistance dog users appropriate additional assistance from staff while the building work is being undertaken. This is likely to be a reasonable step for the service provider to have to take in the circumstances then existing.

Equally, a step that might previously have been an unreasonable one for an organisation to have to take could become a reasonable step because circumstances have changed. For example, technological developments may provide new or better solutions to the problems of inaccessible services.

For example:

A library has a small number of computers for the public to use. When the computers were originally installed, the library investigated the option of incorporating text-to-speech software for people with a visual impairment. It rejected the option because the software was very expensive and not particularly effective. It would not have been a reasonable step for the library to have to take at that stage. The library proposes to replace the computers. It makes enquiries and establishes that text-to-speech software is now efficient and within the library's budget. The library decides to install the software on the replacement computers. This is likely to be a reasonable step for the library to have to take at this time.

## Who pays for an adjustment?

If an adjustment is reasonable, the person or organisation providing it must pay for it. As a disabled person, even if you have asked for the adjustment, you must not be asked to pay for it.

For example:

A guest house has installed an audio-visual fire alarm in one of its guest bedrooms in order to accommodate visitors with a sensory impairment. In order to recover the costs of this installation, the landlady charges disabled guests a higher daily charge for that room, although it is otherwise identical to other bedrooms. This increased charge is unlikely to be within the law.

Even if the person or organisation charges other people for a service, such as delivering something, if the reason they are providing the service to you is as a reasonable adjustment, they must not charge you for it. But if you are using the service in exactly the same way as other customers, clients, service users or members, then they can charge you the same as they charge other people.

For example:

A wine merchant runs an online shopping service and charges all customers for home delivery. Its customers include disabled people with mobility impairments. Since this online service does not create a substantial disadvantage for disabled people with mobility impairments wishing to use it, home delivery, in these circumstances, will not be a reasonable adjustment that the wine merchant has to make. Therefore, the wine merchant can charge disabled customers in the same way as other customers for this service.

However, another wine merchant has a shop which is inaccessible to disabled people with mobility impairments. Home delivery in these circumstances might be a reasonable adjustment for the wine merchant to have to make for these customers. The wine merchant could not then charge such customers for home delivery, even though it charges other customers for home delivery.

## What you can do if you think an organisation has not made reasonable adjustments

If you look at the definition of disability, you will immediately realise that disabled people are a diverse group with different requirements. Different things about the way an organisation delivers its services may create different barriers for disabled people with different impairments.

An organisation providing goods, facilities or services to the public or a section of the public, carrying out public functions or running an association must think about disabled people in general. It must make reasonable adjustments even if it does not know that a particular customer, client, service user or member is a disabled person. It must make reasonable adjustments even if it believes it currently has no disabled customers, clients, service users or members.

But organisations are not expected to anticipate the needs of every person who may use their service.

If you are a disabled person and try to use a service but find there is a barrier which someone who did not have your impairment would not face, the organisation must consider reasonable adjustments to remove that barrier.

You should point out the difficulty you face in accessing the services, or receiving the public function, or joining or belonging to the association. You could even suggest a reasonable way to overcome the barrier, although you do not have to. It is up to the organisation to find the answer and decide if it is reasonable for them. But if you know about something that has removed a similar barrier, it would obviously be helpful for you to tell the organisation about it.

You can read more about what to do if you believe you've been discriminated against in Chapter 5. This includes what to do if you believe an organisation has failed to make reasonable adjustments.

# When the duty is different

## Associations

What associations must do under equality law is explained in the Equality and Human Rights Commission guide *Your Rights to Equality: Associations, clubs and societies*.

Associations must make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in their selection processes and in how members, associate members and guests (and prospective members and guests) access their services and enjoy their benefits and facilities.

The aim of reasonable adjustments is to make sure that disabled people are able to join an association or use its services as far as is reasonably possible to the same standard usually offered to non-disabled people.

An association does not just have to think about reasonable adjustments for disabled people who are already members, associate members or guests, but also to disabled people who are:

- seeking or might wish to become members, or
- are likely to become guests.

This means they must think in advance about what disabled people with a range of impairments might reasonably need, such as people who have a visual impairment, a hearing impairment, a mobility impairment or a learning disability.

If it is the **physical features** of a building the association occupies or is using that put disabled people at a substantial disadvantage, the association must either:

- make reasonable adjustments to avoid the disadvantage, or
- find a reasonable alternative way of providing members, associate members and guests (and prospective members and guests) with the same access to membership and to its services.

It is important to note that an alternative way of providing the service which segregates or inconveniences disabled people may not be as good as an adjustment which allows disabled people to access the service in much the same way that non-disabled people do. If there is a better adjustment which could reasonably be made and which does not segregate or inconvenience disabled people, the alternative way of providing the service and so on may not actually be a reasonable adjustment to make at all.

Where meetings take place in a member's or associate member's home, then reasonable adjustments do not have to be made to **physical features** to make it accessible for a member who is a disabled person and for whom the physical features of the meeting place present a barrier to their attending the meeting.

But it may be a reasonable adjustment to hold the meeting at an **accessible venue**.

For example:

A cycling club has 30 members and no premises of its own. Instead members meet in the leader's house once a year for their AGM. This has no suitable access for a disabled member of the club, an amputee who uses a wheelchair. (The member uses a specially adapted tandem when cycling.) As a reasonable adjustment, the club decides to hold its meetings in a local sports hall which has suitable access.

Even if this is not a reasonable adjustment taking into account all the circumstances of the association, such as its size and resources, the association may want to consider whether as a matter of good practice it should change where it meets to an accessible venue.

## ***Rented premises or premises available to rent***

The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies to landlords and managers of rented premises or premises which are available to rent. This may include a landlord, a letting agency, a property management company, a management or residents' committee of a block of flats, and any other person who, in practice, has control over how the premises are let or managed. In this guide, these people are referred to as 'controllers of the premises'.

The letting of both commercial premises and houses for domestic use (subject to some exceptions) are covered. Letting includes sub-letting, and the granting of contractual licences to occupy premises (as opposed to an interest in the property which is granted by a lease). However, it does not include private sales (called **private disposals** in the Act) provided that an estate agent has not been used and no advert published. Similarly, it does not apply if the landlord is simply renting a room or rooms in a house with room for six people or less where she or a relative or partner are still living. This is called the **small premises** exemption.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to the letting of premises is different from the usual duty to make reasonable adjustments relating to services.

First, it is not anticipatory. The duty only arises if the controller of the premises is requested to make an adjustment by a person to whom the premises are let or who wishes to rent the premises, or someone on their behalf. The request may not necessarily be made formally and the landlord should presume that they are under an obligation to make a reasonable adjustment if it is reasonable to assume that a request has been made.

For example:

A landlord is speaking to a prospective tenant on the telephone to arrange a meeting to sign a tenancy agreement. During the conversation, the tenant explains that they are visually impaired and find the print in the tenancy agreement too small. The tenant is identifying an impairment and it is likely that it would be reasonable to regard this as being a request for an auxiliary aid, such as a tenancy agreement in an alternative format. The tenant does not have to request a particular format for the landlord to have to consider an adjustment.

Second, there are just two requirements. These are:

- Providing auxiliary aids and services.
- Changing provisions, criteria or practices, including (once premises have been let) changing a term of the letting. For example, a 'no dogs' term in a lease entered into by a disabled person who uses an assistance dog.

There is no requirement to make any changes which would consist of or include the removal or alteration of a physical feature, which includes:

- any feature arising from the design or construction of a building
- any feature of any approach to, exit from or access to a building
- any fixtures or fittings in or on premises
- any other physical element or quality.

Physical features do not include furniture, furnishings, materials, equipment or other items of personal property.



Changes are unlikely to be treated as consisting of or including the alteration of a physical feature where they have only an incidental effect on a physical feature.

For example:

Attaching something to a physical feature, such as a wall, with a screw is unlikely to amount to an alteration of the physical feature. However, something more significant, such as installing a concrete ramp between a step and a path, is likely to amount to an alteration of a physical feature.

Things like the replacement or provision of any signs or notices, the replacement of any taps or door handles, the replacement, provision or adaptation of any doorbell or door entry system, changes to the colour of any surface (such as a wall or a door, for example) do not count as physical features, so the duty to make reasonable adjustments could require changes to them.

The same tests apply when deciding if an adjustment is a reasonable adjustment:

- how effective the change will be in assisting the tenant or family member who needs the adjustment
- whether it can actually be done
- the cost
- the controller's resources and size.

Although a controller of premises is not required to alter physical features, there are specific rules about when a controller of premises must agree to tenants themselves making alterations to physical features of rented homes, and these are explained in the Equality and Human Rights Commission guide *Your rights to equality in housing*. In future, there may also be specific rules about the process to be followed when requests are made for alterations to shared areas or 'common parts' of buildings and this guidance will be updated to reflect these changes.

## **Transport**

A transport provider's duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can use services applies to the way vehicles are operated, for example, by requiring train or station staff to assist a person with a mobility impairment in getting on and off a train, or by a bus driver telling a visually impaired person when they have reached their stop. It may require a service to be provided in a different way.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments also applies to adding auxiliary aids or equipment to existing vehicles, such as audio-visual passenger information, priority seating and contrasting handrails; these may be reasonable adjustments and, if so, the transport provider must provide them.

However, changes do not have to be made to physical features of existing land vehicles, except for some rental vehicles.

But some types of land vehicle must be replaced by a certain date with new vehicles, which do provide level access and a range of other equipment to make sure that they can be used by disabled people with a range of impairments.

These rules are explained in detail in the Equality and Human Rights Commission guide *Your rights to equality: transport and travel*.

## 5. What to do if you believe you've been discriminated against

If you believe someone has **unlawfully discriminated** against you, **harassed** or **victimised** you in relation to the **goods, facilities** or **services**, or **public functions** they provide, or an association they run, what can you do about it?

This part of this guide:

- tells you what your choices are
- suggests how you can decide if what happened was against equality law
- suggests ways you might be able to sort out the situation with the person or organisation directly
- tells you where to find information about what is called alternative dispute resolution (asking someone else, but not a court, to sort out the situation)
- explains the questions procedure, which you can use to find out more information from a person or organisation if you believe you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, harassed or victimised
- explains some key points about court procedures in discrimination cases relating to claims outside the workplace:
  - where claims are brought
  - time limits for making a claim
  - the standard and burden of proof
  - what the court can order a person or organisation to do
- tells you where to find out more about making a claim in court.

## Your choices

There are three things you can do:

- Complain directly to the person or organisation.
- Use someone else to help you sort it out (alternative dispute resolution).
- Make a claim in court.

You do not have to choose only one of these. Instead, you could try them in turn. If the first does not work, you could try the second, and if that is also unsuccessful, you could make a claim in court.

Just be aware that if you do decide to make a claim in court, you need to tell the court about your claim (by filling in a form and paying a fee) within six months of what happened.

You do not have to go first to the person or organisation you believe discriminated against you or harassed or victimised you or to anyone else before making a claim in court.

You can, if you want to, make a claim in court straight away. But do think carefully about whether making a claim in court is the right course of action for you.

Making a claim may be demanding on your time and emotions, and before starting the process you may want to look at whether or not you have a good chance of succeeding. You may also want to see if there are better ways of sorting out your complaint.

## Was what happened against equality law?

Write down what happened as soon as you can after it happened, or tell someone else about it so they can write it down. Put in as much detail as you can about who was involved and what was said or done. Remember, the problem will sometimes be that something was not done.

For example:

- If you are a disabled person and you asked for a **reasonable adjustment** which was not made.
- If someone did not change a decision they had made or stop applying a rule or way of doing things and this had a worse impact on you and other people with the same protected characteristic (**indirect discrimination**).

Read the rest of this guide. Does what happened sound like any of the things we say a person or organisation must or must not do?

Sometimes it is difficult to work out if what happened is against equality law. You need to show that your protected characteristics played a part in what happened. The rest of this guide tells you more about what this means for the different types of unlawful discrimination or for harassment or victimisation.

If you think you need more information from the person or organisation before deciding what to do, then you can use the questions procedure, which we explain at page 56.

If you feel you need to get more advice on whether what happened was against equality law, you will find information on places where you can get help *Further sources of information and advice*.

## **Complaining directly to the person or organisation**

Whether you contact the person or organisation direct will depend on what happened, how badly it has affected you, who it is possible to contact and how it is possible to contact them.

Even if you don't at this stage get advice from one of the places we suggest or from a lawyer, you can always ask a friend or someone else you know to help you work out what to write or say.

Follow any instructions the person or organisation gives you about how to comment, complain or give feedback. For example, they may ask you to contact:

- special telephone number or email address or postal address, or
- a particular person.

If you're not sure if there is a special way to complain, ask someone at the organisation how you can make a comment on their service or get someone else to ask for you. Or you could look at any information you have about them, like a leaflet or a website.

If it is just one person providing the service (for example, someone running a small business), then, if you decide to try to sort it out with them first, your only option is for you or someone else to contact them direct.

When you get in touch, try to stick to just saying or writing what happened and, if you can, say why you believe it was the wrong way for the member of staff or other person to behave towards you.

Once you have got in touch, the person or organisation may need to take some time to look into what has happened. So you may need to allow a bit of time for this. But they should not take a very long time.

They may ask you for more information. Try to give them this as soon as you can.

They should then tell you within a reasonable time what they have decided.

If after investigating what has happened, the person or organisation decides:

- no unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation took place, or
- that they are not responsible for what has happened (see in Chapter 3)

then they should tell you this is what they have decided.

If they don't explain why they decided this, you can ask them to explain. They do not have to explain, but if they do, it may help you to decide what to do next. For example, if it is worth making a claim in court.

If you don't hear anything from them within a reasonable time, you can remind them of your complaint.

But do remember that if you decide to make a claim in court, you only have six months to fill in the form that starts the claim. The six months starts with the date when you believe you were unlawfully discriminated against, harassed or victimised.

So don't wait so long for an answer that you are not able to do anything else if the person or organisation does not agree with your complaint or does not agree to do what you believe they should do to set things right.

If they agree that you were unlawfully discriminated against, harassed or victimised, you need to agree with them the best way to solve the complaint.

You may want an apology and to be reassured that they have changed the way they do things or that they have told their staff what they must do to avoid the same thing happening again to you or to someone else.

Or you may have had to spend more money getting the service from somewhere else or have had your feelings badly hurt, which means you believe they should pay you some money in compensation.

Tell the person or organisation what you are thinking of and see if you can both agree. You may need to give way a bit in order to reach an agreement, but this is up to you. If you cannot agree between you how to set things right, then you need to decide if you want to get help from someone else (alternative dispute resolution) or make a claim in court.

## **Alternative dispute resolution**

The first part of this section assumed you would make the complaint yourself, or with the help of someone you already know.

If you want to get help in sorting out a complaint about discrimination, you could try to get the person or organisation you are complaining about to agree to what is usually called 'alternative dispute resolution' or ADR. ADR involves finding a way of sorting out the complaint without a formal court hearing. ADR techniques include mediation and conciliation.

You can find out more about ADR, whether any of the options might be suitable in your situation, what you have to do, and how much it might cost from:

- ADRnow, an information service run by the Advice Services Alliance (ASA) if you are in England and Wales, and
- the Scottish Government publication *Resolving Disputes Without Going To Court* if you are in Scotland.

Details of these organisations are in *Further sources of information and advice*.

## **Conciliation**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission runs a conciliation service as an alternative route to court action. The service is free, confidential and accessible. If the complaint is sorted out during the conciliation, it can result in a binding settlement. If it is not sorted out, you still have the option of taking the claim to court. If you want to find out more about this service, contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission helpline.

## **The questions procedure**

If you believe you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, harassed or victimised under equality law, then you can get information from the person or organisation you believe is responsible to help you decide if you have a valid claim or not.

There is a set form to help you do this which you can see at [www.equalities.gov.uk](http://www.equalities.gov.uk), but your questions will still count even if you do not use the form, so long as you use the same questions.

If you send questions to a person or organisation, they are not legally required to reply to the request, or to answer the questions, but it may harm their case if they do not.

The questions and the answers can form part of the evidence in the case you make under the Equality Act 2010.

If the person or organisation does not respond to the questionnaire within eight weeks of it being sent, then the court can take that into account when making its judgment. The court can also take into account answers which are evasive or unclear.

- There is an exception to this. The court cannot take the failure to answer into account if an organisation or person states that to give an answer could prejudice criminal proceedings and this is reasonable. Most of the time, breaking equality law only leads to a claim in a civil court. Occasionally, breaking equality law can be punished by the criminal courts. In that situation, someone may be able to refuse to answer the questions, if in answering they might incriminate themselves and it is reasonable for them not to answer.

If someone has told you this applies to the questions you have asked, you should get more advice on what to do.

## ***Key points about discrimination cases outside the workplace***

The key points this guide explains are:

- where claims are brought
- time limits for making a claim
- the standard and burden of proof
- what the court can order a person or organisation to do



## Where claims are brought

If the person or organisation you believe has unlawfully discriminated against you, harassed or victimised you against equality law is:

- a service provider, or
- carrying out public functions, or
- an association, including private clubs and political parties, or
- a premises provider, whether they provide housing or commercial premises, or
- in some circumstances, an education provider

then you should make your claim against them in the County Court in England and Wales and in the Sheriff Court in Scotland.

If the organisation is a **public authority**, you may also make a claim for **judicial review** in the High Court in England and Wales or the Court of Session in Scotland.

## Time limits for making a claim

If you want to make a claim in court for unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation relating to equality law, you must make it within six months of the act that you are complaining about.

If you are complaining about behaviour over a period of time, then the six months begins at the end of the period.

If you are complaining about a failure to do something, for example, a failure to make reasonable adjustments, then the six months begins when the decision was made not to do it.

If there is no solid evidence of a decision, then the decision is assumed to have been made either:

- when the person who failed to do the thing does something else which shows they don't intend to do it, or
- at the end of the time when they might reasonably have been expected to do the thing.

For example:

A business sells goods over the internet. It is having its website redesigned. It looks into having its website made more accessible to disabled people and decides that doing this is a reasonable adjustment. The new website claims to be fully accessible. However, when the new website goes live, it turns out not to be any more accessible than the old one. The business does not do anything about this. A disabled person writes to the organisation and asks them to bring their website up to the standard they are claiming for it. The organisation does nothing. The time limit for making a claim in court is measured from the time when they might reasonably be expected to have made improvements to the website.

A court can hear a claim if it is brought outside this time limit if the court thinks that it would be 'just and equitable' (fair to both sides) for it to do this.

If a claim has been referred to the Equality and Human Rights Commission for conciliation within six months of the claimed unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation taking place, the time limit for making a claim in court is increased to nine months.

## **The standard and burden of proof**

The standard of proof in discrimination cases is the usual one in civil (non-criminal) cases. You and the other side must try to prove the facts of your case are true on the balance of probabilities, in other words, that it is more likely than not in the view of the court or tribunal that your version of events is true.

If you are claiming unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation against a person or organisation, then the burden of proof begins with you. You must prove enough facts from which the court can decide, without any other explanation, that the discrimination, harassment or victimisation has taken place.

Once you have done this, then, in the absence of any other explanation, the burden shifts onto the other side to show that they (or someone whose actions or failures to act they were responsible for – see Chapter 3 for what this means) did not discriminate, harass or victimise you.

## What the court can order a person or organisation to do

What the court can order the other side to do if you win your case is called ‘a remedy’.

County Courts and Sheriff Courts hearing discrimination claims can grant any remedy that the High Court in England or Wales or the Court of Session in Scotland can grant for a civil wrong or in a claim for judicial review.

The main remedies available are:

- Damages (including compensation for injuries to your feelings).
- An injunction in England or Wales or an interdict in Scotland – this is an order made by the court to stop a person or organisation from acting in an unlawful way. Sometimes, an injunction in England or Wales can be mandatory; that is, the person or organisation has to do something (for example, has to change a policy or make a reasonable adjustment). In Scotland, an order for specific implement works in the same way.
- A declaration in England or Wales or a declarator in Scotland – this is a statement by the court which says that someone has been discriminated against.

In cases of **indirect discrimination**, if the other side can prove that they did not intend what they did to be discriminatory, the court must consider all of the remedies before looking at damages.

The court can also order the other side to pay your legal costs and expenses.

But if you lose your claim, the court may order you to pay the other side’s legal costs and expenses.

## **More information about making a claim in court**

You can find out more about what to do if you want to make a claim in court from:

- In England and Wales: Her Majesty’s Courts Service: see *Further sources of information and advice* for contact details.
- In Scotland: Scottish Courts Service: see *Further sources of information and advice* for contact details.

## 6. Further sources of information and advice

### General advice and information

#### **Equality and Human Rights Commission:**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is the independent advocate for equality and human rights in Britain. It aims to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between people, and promote and protect human rights. The Equality and Human Rights Commission helplines advise both individuals and organisations such as employers and service providers.

Website: [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

#### **Helpline – England**

Email: [info@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:info@equalityhumanrights.com)

Telephone: 0845 604 6610

Textphone: 0845 604 6620

Fax: 0845 604 6630

08:00–18:00 Monday to Friday

#### **Helpline – Wales**

Email: [wales@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:wales@equalityhumanrights.com)

Telephone: 0845 604 8810

Textphone: 0845 604 8820

Fax: 0845 604 8830

08:00–18:00 Monday to Friday

#### **Helpline – Scotland**

Email: [scotland@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:scotland@equalityhumanrights.com)

Telephone: 0845 604 5510

Textphone: 0845 604 5520

Fax: 0845 604 5530

08:00–18:00 Monday to Friday

#### **Advicenow:**

An independent, not-for-profit website providing accurate, up-to-date information on rights and legal issues.

Website: <http://www.advicenow.org.uk/>

**Advice UK:**

A UK network of advice-providing organisations. They do not give out advice themselves, but the website has a directory of advice-giving agencies.

Website: [www.adviceuk.org.uk](http://www.adviceuk.org.uk)

Email: [mail@adviceuk.org.uk](mailto:mail@adviceuk.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7469 5700

Fax: 020 7469 5701

**Citizens Advice:**

Citizens Advice Bureaux provide free, confidential and independent advice in England and Wales. Advice is available face-to-face and by telephone. Most bureaux offer home visits and some also provide email advice. To receive advice, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau, which you can find by visiting the website.

Website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Telephone: (admin only) 020 7833 2181

Fax: (admin only) 020 7833 4371

The Adviceguide website is the main public information service of Citizens Advice. It covers England, Scotland and Wales.

Website: [www.adviceguide.org.uk/](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/)

**Citizens Advice Scotland:**

Citizens Advice Scotland is the umbrella organisation for bureaux in Scotland. They do not offer advice directly but can provide information on Scottish bureaux.

Website: [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)

**Community Legal Service (CLS):**

The CLS can help you find legal advice and information from a range of sources, including Citizens Advice Bureaux, law centres, independent advice centres and high street solicitors across England and Wales. You can also find out more about legal aid and whether you might be entitled to financial help with your case. The CLS helpline can give you free advice about benefits, tax credits, debt, education, employment or housing if you qualify for legal aid.

Website: [www.clsdirect.org.uk](http://www.clsdirect.org.uk)

Tel: 0845 345 4 345

**Directgov:**

Directgov is the UK government's digital service for people in England and Wales. It delivers information and practical advice about public services, bringing them all together in one place.

Website: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

**Government Equalities Office (GEO):**

The GEO is the Government department responsible for equalities legislation and policy in the UK.

Website: [www.equalities.gov.uk](http://www.equalities.gov.uk)

Telephone: 020 7944 4400

**Law Centres Federation:**

The Law Centres Federation is the national co-ordinating organisation for a network of community-based law centres. Law centres provide free and independent specialist legal advice and representation to people who live or work in their catchment areas. The Federation does not itself provide legal advice, but can provide details of your nearest law centre.

Website: [www.lawcentres.org.uk](http://www.lawcentres.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7842 0720

Fax: 020 7842 0721

Email: [info@lawcentres.org.uk](mailto:info@lawcentres.org.uk)

**The Law Society:**

The Law Society is the representative organisation for solicitors in England and Wales. Their website has an online directory of law firms and solicitors. You can also call their enquiry line for help in finding a solicitor. They do not provide legal advice.

Website: [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7242 1222 (general enquiries)

They also have a Wales office:

Telephone: 029 2064 5254

Fax: 029 2022 5944

Email: [wales@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:wales@lawsociety.org.uk)

### **Scottish Association of Law Centres (SALC):**

SALC represents law centres across Scotland.

Website: [www.scotlawcentres.blogspot.com](http://www.scotlawcentres.blogspot.com)

Telephone: 0141 561 7266

## **Advice on specific issues**

### **Age**

#### **Age UK:**

Age UK aims to improve later life for everyone by providing information and advice, campaigns, products, training and research.

Website: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Telephone: 0800 169 6565

Email: [contact@ageuk.org.uk](mailto:contact@ageuk.org.uk)

#### **ChildLine:**

ChildLine is the UK's free, confidential helpline dedicated to children and young people. Advice can also be found on its website.

Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Telephone: 0800 1111

#### **The Children's Legal Centre (CLC):**

The CLC provides legal advice, information and representation for children and young people.

Website: [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

Telephone: 01206 877 910

Fax: 01206 877 963

Email: [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk)

#### **Children's Rights Alliance England (CRAE):**

CRAE provides free legal information and advice, raises awareness of children's human rights, and undertakes research about children's access to their rights.

Website: [www.crae.org.uk](http://www.crae.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7278 8222

Advice line (Tues to Thurs 3.30-5.30pm): 0800 32 88 759

Email: [info@crae.org.uk](mailto:info@crae.org.uk)

Advice email: [advice@crae.org.uk](mailto:advice@crae.org.uk)

## **Carers**

### **Carers.org:**

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers is the largest provider of comprehensive carers' support services in the UK through its unique network of 144 independently managed Carers' Centres, 85 young carers' services and interactive websites. The Trust currently provides quality information, advice and support services to over 400,000 carers, including approximately 25,000 young carers.

Website: [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org) / [www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net)

Telephone: 0844 800 4361

Fax: 0844 800 4362

Email: [info@carers.org](mailto:info@carers.org)

### **Carers UK:**

The voice of carers. Carers provide unpaid care by looking after an ill, frail or disabled family member, friend or partner.

#### **England**

Website: [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

Telephone: 020 7378 4999

Email: [info@carersuk.org](mailto:info@carersuk.org)

#### **Scotland**

Website: [www.carerscotland.org](http://www.carerscotland.org)

Telephone: 0141 445 3070

Email: [info@carerscotland.org](mailto:info@carerscotland.org)

#### **Wales**

Website: [www.carerswales.org](http://www.carerswales.org)

Telephone: 029 2081 1370

Email: [info@carerswales.org](mailto:info@carerswales.org)



## ***Disability***

### **Disability Law Service (DLS):**

The DLS is a national charity providing information and advice to disabled and Deaf people. It covers a wide range of topics including discrimination, consumer issues, education and employment.

Website: [www.dls.org.uk](http://www.dls.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7791 9800

Minicom: 020 7791 9801

### **Mencap:**

Mencap is the leading UK charity for people with a learning disability and their families. It provides a range of services including advice and information.

Website: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 808 1111

Fax: 020 7608 3254

Email: [information@mencap.org.uk](mailto:information@mencap.org.uk)

### **Mind:**

Mind is the leading mental health charity for England and Wales. It provides information to help promote understanding of mental health and campaigns to promote and protect good mental health. It has an info-line and a legal services line, and also provides online advice.

Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Infoline: 0845 766 0163

Legal Advice Service: 0845 2259393

Email: [legal@mind.org.uk](mailto:legal@mind.org.uk)

### **RADAR:**

RADAR is a national umbrella organisation with around 500 member groups. It campaigns for equal rights for disabled people and gives information and advice on disability issues.

Website: [www.radar.org.uk](http://www.radar.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7250 3222

Fax: 020 7250 0212

Minicom: 020 7250 4119

Email: [radar@radar.org.uk](mailto:radar@radar.org.uk)

**Rethink:**

Rethink helps over 48,000 people every year through its services, support groups and by providing information on mental health problems.

Website: [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

Telephone: 020 7840 3188 or 0845 456 0455 (10:00 to 14:00 Monday–Friday)

Email: [advice@rethink.org](mailto:advice@rethink.org)

**Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB):**

The RNIB is the UK's leading charity offering information, support and advice to over two million people with sight loss.

Website: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

Helpline: 0303 123 9999

Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

**Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID):**

The RNID offers a range of services for Deaf and hard of hearing people and provides information and support on all aspects of deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus.

Website: [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

Fax: 020 7296 8199

Email: [informationline@rnid.org.uk](mailto:informationline@rnid.org.uk) / [tinnitushelpline@rnid.org.uk](mailto:tinnitushelpline@rnid.org.uk)

**SCOPE:**

Scope is the leading UK disability charity for children and adults with cerebral palsy. It provides information, help, support and advice on disability issues.

Website: [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

Helpline: 0808 800 3333

Text SCOPE, plus your message to 80039

Email: [cphelpline@scope.org.uk](mailto:cphelpline@scope.org.uk)

**Terrence Higgins Trust:**

Terrence Higgins Trust is the leading and largest HIV and sexual health charity in the UK. It offers a range of services including advice and information for people affected by HIV.

Website: [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)

Telephone: 0845 1221 200 (10:00–22:00 Monday– Friday, 12:00–18:00 Saturday and Sunday)

Email: [info@tht.org.uk](mailto:info@tht.org.uk)

## **Gender**

### **Gingerbread:**

Gingerbread is a national and local charity working for, and with, single parent families, to improve their lives. It lobbies and campaigns to raise awareness and provides advice and information for single parents.

Website: [www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 802 0925 (single parent helpline)

Email: [info@gingerbread.org.uk](mailto:info@gingerbread.org.uk)

### **Maternity Action:**

Maternity Action works to end inequality and promote the health and well-being of all pregnant women, their partners and children from before conception through to the child's early years. It provides information sheets but cannot provide advice on individual cases.

Website: [www.maternityaction.org.uk](http://www.maternityaction.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7253 2288

### **Rights of Women (RoW):**

RoW is a UK voluntary organisation working to attain justice and equality by informing, educating and empowering women on their legal rights. It provides free, confidential advice on a range of issues.

Website: [www.row.org.uk](http://www.row.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7251 6577

Email: [info@row.org.uk](mailto:info@row.org.uk)

### **Women's Aid:**

Women's Aid is the key national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children. It supports a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK and provides a free 24-hour helpline.

Website: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 2000 247

Email: [info@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:info@womensaid.org.uk)

Helpline: [helpline@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:helpline@womensaid.org.uk)

## ***Gender Reassignment***

### **Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES):**

GIRES provides a wide range of information and training for Trans people, their families and professionals who care for them.

Website: [www.gires.org.uk](http://www.gires.org.uk)

Telephone: 01372 801 554

Fax: 01372 272 297

Email: [info@gires.org.uk](mailto:info@gires.org.uk)

### **The Gender Trust:**

The Gender Trust is the UK's largest charity working to support transsexual, gender dysphoric and transgender people or those who are affected by gender identity issues. It has a helpline and provides training and information for employers and organisations.

Website: [www.gendertrust.org.uk](http://www.gendertrust.org.uk)

Telephone: 0845 231 0505

### **Press for Change (PfC):**

PfC is a political lobbying and educational organisation. It campaigns to achieve equality and human rights for all Trans people in the UK through legislation and social change. It provides legal advice, training and consultancy for employers and organisations as well as undertaking commissioned research.

Website: [www.transequality.co.uk](http://www.transequality.co.uk) / [www.pfc.org.uk](http://www.pfc.org.uk)

Telephone: 0161 432 1915 (10:00–17:00, Thursdays only until further notice)

Email: [transequality@pfc.org.uk](mailto:transequality@pfc.org.uk)

### **Trans Youth Network:**

Run by and for young trans people aged 11–26, Trans Youth Network is a new UK-wide project to provide advocacy, support, signposting and training opportunities to young trans people and young people unsure of, questioning, and generally exploring their biological sex, gender or gender identity in any way at all.

Website: <http://www.transyouth.org/>

Email: [transyouthnet@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:transyouthnet@yahoo.co.uk)

## ***Religion or belief***

### **Inter Faith Network:**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK promotes good relations between people of different faiths. It has a good list of contact details for faith groups and organisations across the UK.

Website: [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7931 7766

Fax: 020 7931 7722

Email: [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)

## ***Sexual orientation***

### **The Albert Kennedy Trust:**

The Albert Kennedy Trust provides information and support to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans homeless young people.

Website: [www.akt.org.uk](http://www.akt.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7831 6562 (London)

Telephone: 0161 228 3308

Email: [contact@akt.org.uk](mailto:contact@akt.org.uk)

### **Equality Network:**

The Equality Network works for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality and human rights in Scotland. It provides information, and carries out campaigning and policy work.

Website: [www.equality-network.org](http://www.equality-network.org)

Telephone: 07020 933 952

Fax: 07080 933 954

Email: [en@equality-network.org](mailto:en@equality-network.org)

### **Galop:**

Galop works to prevent and challenge homophobic and transphobic hate crime in Greater London. It aims to reduce crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and campaigns for an improved criminal justice system.

Website: [www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

Helpline: 020 7704 2040

Admin: 020 7704 6767

Fax: 020 7704 6707

Email: [info@galop.org.uk](mailto:info@galop.org.uk)

### **The Lesbian and Gay Foundation (LGF):**

The LGF is a North-West based charity working to support lesbian, gay and bisexual people. It provides advice and information, counselling, and support groups.

Website: [www.lgf.org.uk](http://www.lgf.org.uk)

Telephone: 0845 3 30 30 30

Email: [info@lgf.org.uk](mailto:info@lgf.org.uk)

### **Queer Youth Network (QYN):**

QYN is a national organisation providing advocacy, support, signposting and training opportunities to young lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Website: [www.queeryouth.org.uk](http://www.queeryouth.org.uk)

Email: [info@queeryouth.net](mailto:info@queeryouth.net)

### **Stonewall:**

Stonewall is the UK's leading lesbian, gay and bisexual charity and carries out campaigning, lobbying and research work as well as providing a free information service for individuals, organisations and employers.

Website: [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

Telephone: 08000 50 20 20

Email: [info@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:info@stonewall.org.uk)

### **Stonewall Housing:**

Stonewall Housing provides supported housing, advice and advocacy for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities in London.

Website: [www.stonewallhousing.org](http://www.stonewallhousing.org)

Telephone: 020 7359 5767

Email: [info@stonewallhousing.org](mailto:info@stonewallhousing.org)

## 7. Glossary

<b>accessible venue</b>	A building designed and/or altered to ensure that people, including disabled people, can enter and move round freely and access its events and facilities.
<b>Act</b>	A law or piece of legislation passed by both Houses of Parliament and agreed to by the Crown, which then becomes part of statutory law (ie is <i>enacted</i> ).
<b>affirmative action</b>	Positive steps taken to increase the participation of under-represented groups in the workplace. It may encompass such terms as positive action and positive discrimination. The term, which originates from the United States of America, is not used in the Equality Act.
<b>age</b>	This refers to a person belonging to a particular age group, which can mean people of the same age (e.g. 32-year-olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18–30-year-olds, or people over 50).
<b>agent</b>	A person who has authority to act on behalf of another ('the principal') but who is not an employee.
<b>all reasonable steps</b>	In relation to harassment by an employee, all the things which the employer could reasonably have done to stop it; in relation to reasonable adjustments, 'reasonable steps' is another term for the things that the employer could reasonably have done to remove the disadvantage.
<b>alternative format</b>	Media formats which are accessible to disabled people with specific impairments, for example Braille, audio description, subtitles and Easy Read.
<b>anticipatory duty</b>	For service providers, the duty to make reasonable adjustments is anticipatory; within reason, it is owed to all potential disabled customers and not just to those who are known to the service provider.
<b>armed forces</b>	Refers to military service personnel.

<b>associate members</b>	A person who has access to some or all of an association's benefits, facilities and services because they are a member of another associated private club.
<b>associated with</b>	Where a victim of discrimination does not have a protected characteristic but is discriminated against because of their association with someone who does e.g. the parent of a disabled child.
<b>association</b>	An association of people sharing a particular characteristic or interest which has at least 25 members, where admission to membership is regulated and involves a process of selection.
<b>association with</b>	See associated with.
<b>auxiliary aid</b>	Usually a special piece of equipment to improve accessibility.
<b>auxiliary service</b>	A service to improve access to something often involving the provision of a helper/assistant.
<b>Bill</b>	A draft Act, not passed or in force.
<b>breastfeeding</b>	When a woman feeds her baby with breast milk. Breastfeeding is specifically protected for the first 26 weeks after birth by the pregnancy and maternity discrimination provisions in relation to non-work cases.
<b>by association</b>	In the Act, this refers to discrimination against a person who does not have a protected characteristic but because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic. See <i>also</i> 'associated with'.
<b>charity</b>	A body (whether corporate or not) which is for a statutory charitable purpose that provides a benefit to the public.
<b>civil, diplomatic, armed or security and intelligence services</b>	Respectively, this refers to (i) the civil service, (ii) the diplomatic service (iii) the armed forces, (iv) organisations responsible for internal security and counter-intelligence (but not civil police forces).
<b>clients</b>	A customer or patron of a service or organisation, generally where the service provider is professional and is in a position of trust and confidence.



<b>Code of Practice</b>	A statutory guidance document which must be taken into account by the Courts when applying the law and which may assist people to comply with the law.
<b>Comparator</b>	A person with whom a claimant compares themselves to establish less favourable treatment in a discrimination case.
<b>customers</b>	People who buy or use goods or services.
<b>Data Protection</b>	Safeguards concerning personal data provided for by statute, mainly the Data Protection Act 1998.
<b>different needs</b>	Refers to the different requirements that people with protected characteristics may have which either must or should be met to provide equality, including equality of opportunity and access.
<b>direct discrimination</b>	Less favourable treatment of a person compared with another person because of a protected characteristic.
<b>directly discriminatory</b>	See direct discrimination.
<b>disability</b>	A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
<b>disabled person</b>	Someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
<b>disadvantage</b>	A detriment or impediment – something that the individual affected might reasonably consider changes their position for the worse.
<b>disadvantaged</b>	When someone suffers a detriment or finds an impediment to enjoying a benefit in comparison with others because of a characteristic of theirs; encountering a pre-existing barrier which is inherent in their workplace but which doesn't have the same effect on others.
<b>discriminate unlawfully</b>	See unlawful discrimination.

<b>discriminating directly or indirectly</b>	Refers to discrimination because of a person's protected characteristic (direct); or discrimination that occurs when a provision, criteria or practice is applied that creates disproportionate disadvantage for a person with a protected characteristic as compared to those who do not share that characteristic (indirect).
<b>discrimination arising from disability</b>	When a person is treated unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability.
<b>disproportionately low</b>	Refers to situations where people with a protected characteristic are under-represented (e.g. in the workforce or among service users) compared to their numbers in the population.
<b>diversity</b>	Where many different types of people are included.
<b>duty to make reasonable adjustments</b>	Where a disabled person is at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled, there is a duty to take reasonable steps to remove that disadvantage by (i) changing provisions, criteria or practices, (ii) altering, removing or providing a reasonable alternative means of avoiding physical features, and (iii) providing auxiliary aids.
<b>educational establishments</b>	Schools, colleges and higher educational institutions.
<b>employee</b>	A person who carries out work for a person under a contract of service, a contract of apprenticeship, or a contract personally to do work; or a person who carries out work for the Crown or a relevant member of the Houses of Parliament staff. See <i>also</i> worker.
<b>employer</b>	A person who makes work available under a contract of service, a contract of apprenticeship, the Crown or a relevant member of the Houses of Parliament staff.
<b>employment service provider</b>	A person who provides vocational training and guidance, careers services and may supply employers with workers.
<b>employment services</b>	Vocational training and guidance, finding employment for people, supplying employers with workers.

<b>equal pay audit</b>	Comparing the pay of women and men who are doing equal work in an organisation, and investigating the causes of any pay gaps by gender or working pattern. The provisions in the Act directly relating to equal pay refer to sex equality but an equal pay audit could be applied to other protected characteristics to help an employer equality proof their business.
<b>equal work</b>	A woman's work is equal to a man's in the same employment (and vice versa) if it is the same or broadly similar (like work); rated as equivalent to his work under a job evaluation scheme or if she can show that her work is of equal value to his in terms of the demands made of her.
<b>equality clause</b>	A sex equality clause is read into a person's contract of employment so that where there is a term which is less favourable than that enjoyed by someone of the opposite sex doing equal work, that term will be modified to provide equal terms.
<b>equality policy</b>	A statement of an organisation's commitment to the principle of equality of opportunity in the workplace.
<b>equality training</b>	Training on equality law and effective equality practice.
<b>exceptions</b>	Where, in specified circumstances, a provision of the Act does not apply.
<b>flexible working</b>	Working different hours or at home, including to accommodate disability or childcare commitments.
<b>gender reassignment</b>	The process of changing or transitioning from one gender to another. <i>See also</i> transsexual person.
<b>Gender Recognition Certificate</b>	A certificate issued under the Gender Recognition Act to a transsexual person who has, or has had gender dysphoria, has lived in the acquired gender throughout the preceding two years, and intends to continue to live in the acquired gender until death.
<b>goods, facilities or services</b>	Goods refer to moveable property; facilities to opportunities to enjoy a benefit or do something; and services to provisions for meeting people's needs. Goods, facilities and services are available to the public or any part of it.

<b>guaranteed interview scheme</b>	This is a scheme for disabled people which means that an applicant will be invited for interview if they meet the essential specified requirements of the job.
<b>guests</b>	People invited to enjoy an association's benefits, facilities or services by that association or a member of it.
<b>harass</b>	To behave towards someone in a way that violates their dignity, or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.
<b>harassment</b>	Unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment. <i>See also</i> sexual harassment.
<b>impairment</b>	A functional limitation which may lead to a person being defined as disabled according to the definition under the Act. <i>See also</i> disability.
<b>indirect discrimination</b>	The use of an apparently neutral practice, provision or criterion which puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage compared with others who do not share that characteristic, and applying the practice, provision or criterion cannot be objectively justified.
<b>indirectly discriminatory</b>	<i>See</i> indirect discrimination.
<b>Information Society Service Provider (ISSP)</b>	A service provider which provides electronic data storage, usually for payment, for example, selling goods online.
<b>instruction to discriminate</b>	When someone who is in a position to do so instructs another to discriminate against a third party. For example, if a GP instructed her receptionist not to register anyone who might need help from an interpreter, this would amount to an instruction to discriminate.
<b>insurance business</b>	An organisation which provides financial protection against specified risks to clients in exchange for payment.

<b>job evaluation study</b>	This is a study undertaken to evaluate jobs in terms of the demands made on a person, using factors such as effort, skill and decision-making. This can establish whether the work done by a woman and a man is equal, for equal pay purposes. See <i>also</i> equal work.
<b>judicial review</b>	A procedure by which the High Court supervises the exercise of public authority power to ensure that it remains within the bounds of what is lawful.
<b>less favourably</b>	Worse, not as well as.
<b>like work</b>	See equal work.
<b>manifest</b>	Refers to the appearance or expression of a protected characteristic. For example manifestations of sexual orientation can include the person's appearance, the places they visit or the people they mix with.
<b>manifestation</b>	Appearance or expression. See manifest.
<b>marriage and civil partnership</b>	Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples.
<b>maternity</b>	See pregnancy and maternity.
<b>maternity leave</b>	Leave which a woman can take whilst she is pregnant and after the birth of her child divided into compulsory, ordinary and additional maternity leave. How much leave a woman is entitled to will vary, but all women employees are entitled to 26 weeks.
<b>members</b>	People who have been formally accepted into membership of an association.
<b>minister</b>	Someone who is authorised to perform religious functions, such as weddings.
<b>monitor</b>	See monitoring.
<b>monitoring</b>	Monitoring for equality data to check if people with protected characteristics are participating and being treated equally. For example, monitoring the representation of women, or disabled people, in the workforce or at senior levels within organisations.

<b>monitoring form</b>	A form which organisations use to collect equality monitoring data – from, for example, job applicants or service users. It records information about a person’s sex, age, disability, race, religion, or sexual orientation. It is kept separately from any identifying information about the person.
<b>more favourably</b>	To treat somebody better than someone else. This is unlawful under the Act if it is because of a protected characteristic except in very limited circumstances e.g. the duty to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person. The law can require pregnant workers to be treated more favourably in some circumstances.
<b>national security</b>	The security of the nation and its protection from external and internal threats, particularly from activities such as terrorism and threats from other nations.
<b>needs that are different</b>	See different needs.
<b>Normal retirement age</b>	This is the retirement age at which, in practice, employees in a particular job and workplace would normally expect to retire. Normal retirement age can differ from the contractual retirement age. If it is under 65, it must be objectively justified.
<b>objective justification</b>	When something (e.g. an otherwise discriminatory action) can be objectively justified. <i>See also</i> objectively justified.
<b>objectively justified</b>	When something can be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim – that is, the way of achieving the aim is appropriate and necessary.
<b>occupational health</b>	Occupational health can be defined as the ongoing maintenance and promotion of physical, mental and social wellbeing for all workers.
<b>occupational health practitioner</b>	A health professional providing occupational health services.
<b>occupational pension</b>	A pension which an employee may receive after retirement as a contractual benefit.

<b>occupational requirement</b>	Where having a protected characteristic is an occupational requirement, certain jobs can be reserved for people with that protected characteristic (e.g. Women support workers in women's refuges; Ministers of Religion).
<b>office-holders</b>	There are personal and public offices. A personal office is a remunerated office or post to which a person is appointed personally under the direction of someone else. A public office is appointed by a member of the government, or the appointment is recommended by them, or the appointment can be made on the recommendation or with the approval of both Houses of Parliament, the Scottish Parliament or the National Assembly for Wales.
<b>organised religion</b>	Refers to a religion which manifests its beliefs through organised worship.
<b>palantypist</b>	Also known as 'Speech to Text Reporter'. A palantypist reproduces speech into a text format onto a computer screen at verbatim speeds for Deaf or hard of hearing people to read.
<b>past disability</b>	A person who has had a disability as defined by the Equality Act.
<b>perception</b>	In the Equality Act, the belief that someone has a protected characteristic, whether or not they do have it.
<b>physical barriers</b>	A physical feature of a building or premises which places disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people when accessing goods, facilities and services or employment. <i>See also</i> physical features.
<b>physical features</b>	Anything that forms part of the design or construction of a place of work, including any fixtures, such as doors, stairs etc. Physical features do not include furniture, furnishings, materials, equipment or other chattels in or on the premises.

<b>positive action</b>	Refers to a range of lawful actions that seek to overcome or minimise disadvantages (e.g. in employment opportunities) that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs.
<b>positive discrimination</b>	Treating someone with a protected characteristic more favourably to counteract the effects of past discrimination. It is generally not lawful although the duty to make reasonable adjustments is an exception where treating a disabled person more favourably may be required by law.
<b>practicable</b>	Capable of being carried out or put into effect.
<b>pregnancy and maternity</b>	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
<b>pregnant</b>	See pregnancy and maternity.
<b>private disposals</b>	When an owner-occupier disposes of property (i.e. sells or leases etc.) without using an estate agent or publishing an advert in connection with the 'disposal'.
<b>procurement</b>	The term used in relation to the range of goods and services a public body or authority requires and delivers. It includes sourcing and appointment of a service provider and the subsequent management of the goods and services being provided.
<b>professional organisations</b>	A body of persons engaged in the same profession, formed usually to provide advice, maintain standards, and represent the profession in discussions with other bodies about professional concerns.
<b>proportionate</b>	This refers to measures or actions that are appropriate and necessary. Whether something is proportionate in the circumstances will be a question of fact and will involve weighing up the discriminatory impact of the action against the reasons for it, and asking if there is any other way of achieving the aim.



<b>protected characteristics</b>	These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
<b>protected period</b>	This refers to the time in a work context when the specific prohibition against unfavourable treatment of expectant and new mothers applies. The period begins at the start of a woman's pregnancy and continues until the end of her maternity leave.
<b>provision, criterion or practice</b>	Identifying a provision, criterion or practice is key to establishing indirect discrimination. It can include, for example, any formal or informal policies, decisions, rules, practices, arrangements, criteria, conditions, prerequisites or qualifications.
<b>public authority</b>	Organisations and individuals that carry out public functions – this would include, for example, government departments, local authorities, health authorities and hospitals, schools, prisons, and police.
<b>public bodies</b>	Public bodies are defined as bodies which have a role in the processes of national Government but are not a Government department or part of one. They operate to a greater or lesser extent at arm's length from Ministers.
<b>public functions</b>	Any act or activity undertaken by a public authority in relation to delivery of a public service or carrying out duties or functions of a public nature e.g. the provision of policing and prison services, healthcare, including residential care of the elderly, government policy-making or local authority planning services.
<b>public sector equality duty</b>	The duty on a public authority when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity.
<b>qualifications bodies</b>	An authority or body which can confer qualifications.

<b>questions procedure</b>	A discrimination law procedure whereby a pre-action questionnaire is issued to the respondent/defendant, i.e. the person or organisation against whom a discrimination claim may be made.
<b>race</b>	Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.
<b>rated as equivalent</b>	An equal pay concept – see equal work.
<b>reasonable</b>	What is considered reasonable will depend on all the circumstances of the case including the size of an organisation and its resources, what is practicable, the effectiveness of what is being proposed and the likely disruption that would be caused by taking the measure in question as well as the availability of financial assistance.
<b>reasonable adjustment</b>	See the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
<b>reasonable steps</b>	See the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
<b>reasonably</b>	See reasonable.
<b>reasonably believe</b>	This refers to a belief based on objective grounds.
<b>regulations</b>	Secondary legislation made under an Act of Parliament (or European legislation) setting out subsidiary matters which assist in the Act's implementation.
<b>religion or belief</b>	Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
<b>religion or belief organisations</b>	An organisation founded on an ethos based on a religion or belief. Faith schools are one example of a religion or belief organisation. See <i>also</i> religion or belief.
<b>religious organisation</b>	See religion or belief organisations.

<b>retirement age</b>	The age at which an employee retires. This may be the national default retirement age, if there is one, or an age which is set in the contract of employment but which must be capable of being objectively justified.
<b>right to request flexible working</b>	The legal right that qualifying employees, e.g. carers of children have, to request flexible working, e.g. a change in the way you work or the hours you work.
<b>same employment</b>	An equal pay concept (see equal work). Generally, women and men can compare their pay and other conditions with those employed by the same or an associated employer.
<b>separate services</b>	Services only provided for one sex.
<b>service complaint</b>	A complaint about service delivery.
<b>service provider</b>	Someone (including an organisation) who provides services, goods or facilities to the general public or a section of it. See <i>also</i> goods, facilities and services.
<b>service users</b>	Those accessing or using a particular service. See <i>also</i> goods, facilities and services.
<b>services</b>	See goods, facilities and services.
<b>services, goods or facilities</b>	See goods, facilities and services.
<b>sex</b>	This is a protected characteristic. It refers to whether a person is a man or a woman (of any age).
<b>sexual harassment</b>	Any conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted by the recipient, including verbal, non-verbal and physical behaviours, and which violates the victim's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for them.
<b>sexual orientation</b>	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.
<b>single-sex facilities</b>	Facilities which are only available to men or to women, the provision of which may be lawful under the Equality Act.

<b>single-sex services</b>	A service provided only to men or women. It is not always discriminatory to provide single-sex services, for example provision of single-sex changing facilities in a leisure centre.
<b>small premises</b>	Premises are small if they are not normally sufficient to accommodate more than two other households (and no more than six people in addition to the owner-occupier and/or their relatives and/or close relations).
<b>stakeholders</b>	People with an interest in a subject or issue who are likely to be affected by any decision relating to it and/or have responsibilities relating to it.
<b>substantial disadvantage</b>	A disadvantage which is more than minor or trivial.
<b>terms of employment</b>	The provisions of a person's contract of employment, whether provided for expressly in the contract itself or incorporated by statute, custom and practice or common law etc.
<b>textphone</b>	A type of telephone for Deaf or hard of hearing people which is attached to a keyboard and a screen on which the messages sent and received are displayed.
<b>trade unions</b>	These are organisations formed to represent workers' rights and interests to their employers, for example in order to improve working conditions, wages or benefits. They also advocate more widely on behalf of their members' interests and make recommendations to government, industry bodies and other policy makers.
<b>transsexual person</b>	Refers to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. This may be a woman who has transitioned or is transitioning to be a man, or a man who has transitioned or is transitioning to be a woman. The law does not require a person to undergo a medical procedure to be recognised as a transsexual person.
<b>Two Ticks symbol</b>	A sign awarded by Jobcentre Plus to employers who are positive about employing disabled people and are committed to employing, keeping and developing disabled staff.

<b>UK Text Relay Service</b>	Text Relay is a national telephone relay service for Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, deafblind and speech-impaired people. It lets them use a textphone to access any services that are available on standard telephone systems.
<b>unfavourably</b>	The term is used (instead of less favourable) where a comparator is not required to show that someone has been subjected to a detriment or disadvantage because of a protected characteristic – for example in relation to pregnancy and maternity discrimination.
<b>unlawful</b>	Not permitted by law (as distinct from illegal which means 'forbidden by law'). On occasions, unlawful and illegal may be synonymous, but unlawful is more correctly applied in relation to civil (as opposed to criminal) wrongs.
<b>unlawful disability discrimination</b>	See unlawful discrimination and discrimination arising from disability.
<b>Unlawful discrimination</b>	When an employer or service provider has engaged in prohibited conduct against someone with a protected characteristic (discriminated against them) and does not have a valid defence.
<b>unlawful discrimination because of disability</b>	See unlawful discrimination and discrimination arising from disability.
<b>unlawful indirect discrimination</b>	See indirect discrimination.
<b>unlawfully discriminated</b>	See discriminate unlawfully and unlawful discrimination
<b>unlawfully discriminated</b>	See unlawful discrimination
<b>unreasonable</b>	Not reasonable, beyond what's practicable. <i>See also</i> reasonable.
<b>victimisation</b>	Subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done a protected act or there is a belief that they have done a protected act i.e. bringing proceedings under the Equality Act; giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Act; doing any other thing for the purposes or in connection with the Act; making an allegation that a person has contravened the Act.

<b>victimise</b>	The act of victimisation.
<b>vocational service</b>	A range of services to enable people to retain and gain paid employment and mainstream education.
<b>vocational training</b>	Training to do a particular job or task.
<b>work of equal value</b>	See equal work.
<b>work situation</b>	Refers to the employment and workplace context – if disputes or discrimination complaints arise in relation to work they will be heard in the Employment Tribunal.
<b>WORKSTEP</b>	The WORKSTEP employment programme provides support to disabled people facing complex barriers to getting and keeping a job. It also offers practical assistance to employers.
<b>worker</b>	The definition of 'employee' given above also encompasses that of 'worker'. However, in employment law, worker is generally a wider category than employee and includes a contract personally to do work.
<b>worse</b>	When someone is treated less favourably they are treated worse than someone else, literally something which is not as good as someone or something else.

This guide is one of a series written by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to explain your rights under equality law in relation to people and organisations providing services, carrying out public functions or running an association.

There are 9 guides:

1. Your rights to equality as a member, associate member or guest of an association, club or society
2. Your rights to equality from businesses providing goods, facilities or services to the public
3. Your rights to equality from voluntary and community sector organisations (including charities and religion or belief organisations)
4. Your rights to equality from the criminal and civil justice systems and national security
5. Your rights to equality from healthcare and social care services
6. Your rights to equality in housing
7. Your rights to equality from local councils, government departments and immigration
8. Your rights to equality from Parliaments, politicians and political parties
9. Your rights to equality: transport and travel

We have also produced:

- A separate series of guides which explain your rights at work
- Different guides explaining the responsibilities people and organisations have if they are employing people to work for them or if they are providing services, carrying out public functions or running an association

If you would like a copy of any of these guides or require this guide in an alternative format, please call our helpline on **0845 6046610** Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm or see our website **[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)**.