

Have you ever been unfairly treated because of your age?

- when getting a job
- while at work
- in training or at college/university
- by a previous employer/tutor after you have left the job/training
- in your career guidance

If so, you'd better take a look at this!

Did you know?

There is a law that gives you rights and protection from discrimination and harassment because of your age?

This law is called:

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

When does the law protect you?

It can protect you from being treated unfairly because of age:

- when applying for a job
- in the terms and conditions of your employment, eg, the hours you work and the pay you receive
- in opportunities for promotion, transfer or training
- in getting employment-related benefits, eg, holidays
- when your employment is ended, such as your dismissal from work
- after you leave your job/training, eg, when a former employer provides a reference
- while attending college/university.

When does the law not protect you?

This law does not generally protect you from age discrimination in situations where you may be seeking to get:

- goods (such as buying a computer)
- facilities or resources to do something (such as entertainment facilities to hold a party or banking facilities for saving money)
- a service (such as the supply of food to you at a restaurant).

So what is discrimination?

If an employer or tutor treats you worse than they treat others (eg, making you work longer or more unsocial hours) because of age, they may be directly discriminating against you.

This is direct discrimination!

This is how it is! I've worked in this car showroom since I left school. About four weeks ago, they advertised for a car salesperson. So I applied for the job but I didn't get it. My boss told me I have all the skills and expertise and would've got the job only I'm too young. He said I wouldn't fit in with the current sales staff, or be taken seriously by customers. So what's the difference between me selling a car at 20 and all the other sales reps who are about 25? That's unfair.

There is also indirect discrimination!

It is more difficult to spot than direct discrimination. It is often caused by someone putting in place a rule or practice which, although applied to everyone the same, puts you and those of your age group at a particular disadvantage compared to others.

I am 16 and work part-time for a clothes shop. As you would expect, I have to attend school on weekdays. So, I work evenings and weekends.

The company is very good at offering all its employees training; many of my colleagues take the opportunity when it is offered. The trouble is they always provide the training on a weekday morning. I can never attend as I have to go to school. I feel that I am missing out on training that may help me get a promotion or a better job! Is this what you call indirect age discrimination?



Is anything else unlawful?

If you are victimised, harassed, refused, or given a less favourable reference because of your age, you are protected by age discrimination law.

It is unlawful to instruct (tell) or pressurise someone (eg, threaten them) to commit an unlawful act or help someone to carry out any of the unlawful acts mentioned above.

Remember, you are protected from discrimination for other reasons, such as

- disability
- race
- religion & political opinion
- sex
- sexual orientation.

It is not unusual for people to experience discrimination for more than one of these reasons. The Equality Commission can give you more information.

Do you want to know more?

You can obtain more information on laws that protect you from discrimination because of age, or for the other reasons mentioned above, by:

Phoning or e-mailing the Equality Commission's Enquiry Line: 028 90 890 890 or information@equalityni.org

Or visiting the website: www.equalityni.org.

What can you do?

- Ask a trusted friend or colleague for support
- Get free, confidential information and advice from the Equality Commission
- Go to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau or to an independent advice organisation
- Talk to either the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) or the Children's Law Centre (CLC)

Where to go for help

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

7-9 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast BT2 7DP
Enquiry Line: 028 90 890 890
www.equalityni.org
information@equalityni.org

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)

Millennium House
17-25 Great Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 7BA
Tel: 028 90 311 616 or www.niccy.org

Children's Law Centre

3rd Floor Philip House
123 – 137 York Street
Belfast BT15 1AB
Chalky Freephone: 0808 808 5678
www.childrenslawcentre.org
info@childrenslawcentre.org

Citizens' Advice Bureau or Independent Advice Organisation

Look in the Phone Book or visit either www.citizensadvice.co.uk or www.adviceni.net