

## Disability discrimination case settled against Home Bargains



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Equality Commission press release

Ryan Walker has settled his disability discrimination case against his former employer Home Bargains for £25,000. The case was settled without admission of liability and was supported by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Ryan had enjoyed his job and worked happily in the Armagh Store in a Sales Assistant role from July 2017. His duties were warehouse and stock filling and he also worked in other departments.

Ryan lives with Cerebral Palsy and needs to be in an active role where he can keep moving as this helps him to manage his disability. He says that he informed Home Bargains of his disability and his needs during his job interview.



Ryan alleged that things started to change when a new supervisor joined in late 2020. He claims this supervisor regularly asked him to cover checkouts and work extra hours. While he was happy to help on checkouts, he could only do so for short periods of time as he needed to move around due to his disability. Ryan alleged that when he tried to explain to his employer his needs as a disabled person he was told not to “play the disability card.”

Ryan claimed that due to the failure to provide reasonable adjustments and the impact on him, he contacted the company’s Wellbeing Team and lodged a formal complaint. He said it was agreed with his employer, as a reasonable adjustment, that he would only work in the warehouse and fill shelves. But despite this agreement, Ryan alleges he was again ordered to work on the checkouts.

Ryan wrote to his employer to express his frustration that they had not dealt with issues regarding his reasonable adjustments appropriately. In the end he felt he had no option but to resign.

Ryan Walker said: "This has been an awful experience. I went from enjoying a job for three years to dreading going into work. I was honest with my employer about my disability from the start. I was eager to work. I wanted to do a good job, but it was as if some supervisors and managers simply did not care about my disability. In the end, I felt I had no option but to resign as I felt it was damaging my health."

Mary Kitson, Senior Legal Officer, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, said: "There is simply no place for disability discrimination in workplaces in Northern Ireland. Ryan was keen to work and valued his employment. He proactively advised his employer about his disability from the outset and reasonable adjustments were agreed."

"The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 imposes a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities."

"Employers must operate within our equality laws. They must ensure that they treat all employees who are disabled with dignity and respect in the workplace. No employee with a disability should feel that their needs are not understood or valued by their employer."