

How the Equality Commission can help

We offer free and confidential information and advice on your rights under the equality laws. This is available to anyone who asks for it.

In some cases, we can provide support and legal assistance to people to help them take their discrimination case to court or tribunal.

There's more information online on your rights and the law at www.equalityni.org/individuals

Ring a discrimination advice officer on **028 90 500 600** or email information@equalityni.org

If you need any reasonable adjustments to deal with us, we will arrange where necessary, for example, a BSL or foreign language interpreter.

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



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Know Your Rights

Did you know?

Everyone has the right to enjoy equal treatment and a life free from unlawful discrimination.

Northern Ireland's equality laws protect all of us from discrimination because of our:

- ✓ race
- ✓ sex
- ✓ disability
- ✓ age
- ✓ gender assignment
- ✓ marriage or civil partnership status
- ✓ religious or similar philosophical beliefs
- ✓ political opinion
- ✓ sexual orientation

The law applies to many situations, for example, at work or getting a job, finding accommodation and accessing education or healthcare. Services such as those provided by banks, insurance companies, shops, pubs, restaurants and leisure facilities are also covered. This is the case whether the services are paid for or free of charge.

The powers and duties of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland derive from equality laws. The responsibility for making equality policy and legislation lies with the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Northern Ireland Executive.

Anyone who believes they have been discriminated against can get free and confidential advice from the Equality Commission and in some cases may be able to make a complaint about their treatment to a tribunal or court.

This applies to everyone who lives or works in Northern Ireland, whether or not they were born here.

What does the law mean in practice?

Discrimination means being treated less favourably than other people or being harassed on any of the prohibited equality grounds, such as:

- ✓ Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins
- ✓ Sex, including pregnancy and maternity, married/civil partnership status, gender reassignment
- ✓ Religion or similar philosophical belief and political opinion
- ✓ Sexual orientation (LGB)
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Disability

Not all of these grounds apply in all situations. It is not unlawful to discriminate on grounds of age in the provision of goods and services, or on the grounds of gender reassignment in relation to the provision of education.

Sometimes discrimination occurs as a result of barriers or requirements that make it more difficult for some people to access opportunities or services than others. For example, the requirement to be 'a recent graduate' may put older people at a disadvantage when applying for a job.

Every business has a legal duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled people can access their services.

Discrimination can also occur when employers fail to comply with their duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

The law also protects people from being victimised because they have previously made a complaint of discrimination.

In each case, it will be up to a tribunal or court to decide whether the treatment complained of is unlawful discrimination.