



Protected characteristics

What are they?

- *The Equality Act became law in 2010.*
- *It covers everyone in Britain and protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.*
- *Everyone in Britain is protected by this law.*
- *The Equality Act protects people against discrimination because of the protected characteristics that we all have.*
- *Under the Equality Act, there are nine protected characteristics.*

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of:

- *age*
- *disability*
- *gender reassignment*
- *marriage and civil partnership*
- *pregnancy and maternity*
- *race*
- *religion or belief*
- *sex*
- *sexual orientation*

These are the protected characteristics.

Age

A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 years old) or an age range (for example 18 to 30 years)

Disability

A person has a disability if she or he 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.

Gender reassignment

The process of transitioning from one sex to another.

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'Civil Partnerships'. Civil Partnerships must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

Pregnancy and maternity

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 non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

Refers to the protected characteristics of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex

A man or woman.

Sexual Orientation

whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Under the Equality Act, you are protected from discrimination:

- when you are in the workplace*
- when you use public services like healthcare (for example visiting your doctor or local hospital) or education (for example at your school or college)*
- when you use businesses and other organisations that provide services and goods (like shops, restaurants and cinemas)*
- when you use transport*
- when you join a club or association (for example a local rugby club)*
- when you have contact with public bodies like your local council or government departments.*

