Office for Equality and Opportunity

Easy Read

Equality laws and how we will change or improve them

What we will do next



Easy Read

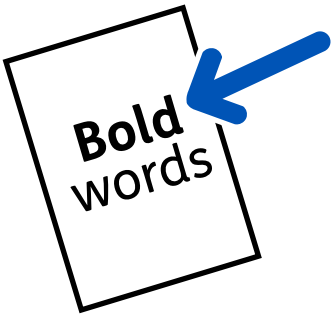


This is an Easy Read version of some information.

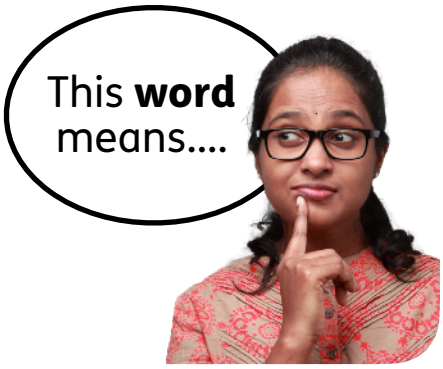
It uses easier words and pictures.



Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are **bold** to show they are important.



We explain bold words if they are hard to understand.

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About us

Office for Equality and Opportunity

We are the **Office for Equality and Opportunity**.



We are a part of the **government**.

The **government** is in charge of running the country.

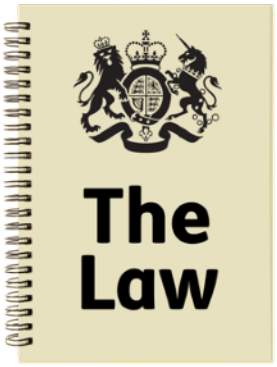


Equality means being fair and making sure everyone has the same chances in life.



Opportunity means having chances to do better in life.

About this booklet



The government wants to improve equality laws and lower **barriers** that stop people from working.



Barriers are things that stop you doing something.



The government wants equality laws to help everyone do well in life and be treated equally.

We wanted to know:



- What people think of equality laws now.



- How people think the government could make changes to equality laws.



So we shared a survey that asked people questions.



We also wanted to collect **evidence**.

Evidence is information, numbers and facts about a subject.

We wanted evidence because it will help us to:



- Understand more about barriers to work so we can lower them.



- Make sure everyone is treated fairly.



- Make sure everyone has the same chances to get work and to do well in work.



- Make sure businesses can give a job to the best person.



We got evidence and information from lots of different types of people and organisations from this survey.



This is being thought about carefully with other evidence and information.



This booklet explains what we will do next.

Equal pay

Equal pay means you are paid the same amount as other people who:



- Do the same job as you.



- Do a job that is just as important as yours.



We want to make sure everyone can get equal pay.

We also want to:



- Make sure people from different **ethnic minorities** and disabled people can get equal pay.



Ethnic minorities are groups of people of the same ethnicity in a place where most other people are a different ethnicity.



- Start a new group which checks that companies are following the rules and giving people equal pay.



We also want to make sure companies do not try to get around equal pay rules by using **outsourced workers.**



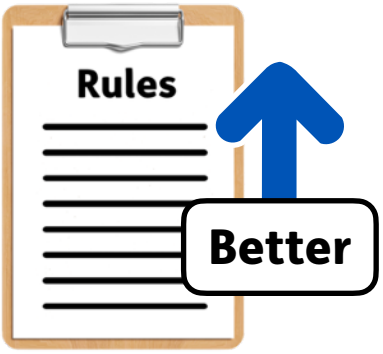
Outsourced workers are paid by another person or company to do work that could be done by staff in an organisation.



We want to make it easier to check that companies are following the rules on equal pay.



We also want to use equal pay rules to protect more people, like disabled people and people from different ethnic minorities.



After looking at answers to our survey and looking at evidence, we decided we needed to make equal pay rules better.



We decided to do another survey.



This survey asked people what they thought about our ideas to improve equal pay.



Anyone could take part.



The survey finished on 27 October.



We are looking at people's answers to this survey.



Then we will update people on what we are planning to do next.

Keeping people safe from harassment at work

Harassment is when someone does or says something that:



- Makes you feel scared or distressed.



- Makes you feel very embarrassed.



- Creates a very unfriendly space for you.



People should be safe from harassment at work.

A new law, called the **Employment Rights Act 2025**, says that employers must:



- Do everything they can to stop sexual harassment before it starts.



- Make sure there is no harassment where their employees work, including harassment from people who do not work there



These rules will start on 30 October 2026.



The government wants to understand the best things to do to stop harassment from happening.



They can then ask employers to do those things to protect their staff from harassment.



We are carrying out research and listening to people's ideas.



This will help us decide what the best things to do are.

The socio-economic duty



The government has set up a new team to help people from all backgrounds to do well in life.



Lots of families with children do not have enough money.



This means these children do not get enough good chances in life and this has a bad effect on their lives.



We are changing the law to make some **public authorities** start using a law called the **socio-economic duty** in England.



Public authorities are organisations owned or run by the government.



They should use the socio-economic duty when they make plans for things like education, health services and housing.



The socio-economic duty will make sure public authorities think about how they can help families who do not have enough money.



We want the socio-economic duty to work well.



So we have listened to people's ideas.



We will write information and speak with public authorities to help them understand how to follow this rule.

Combined discrimination



Combined discrimination is when you are treated worse than someone else because of a mixture of 2 or more protected characteristics that you have.



For example, someone might be treated worse because they are disabled and because of their race.



We want to protect people from this.



There is a law about treating people fairly.

It is called the **Equality Act 2010**.



There is a part of this law that talks about combined discrimination.

It is called **section 14**.

Section 14 has never been used.



We will not use section 14.

We do not think that it is the best way to make sure people are treated fairly.



We think it will make getting protection from the law worse.



Many people do not understand how the law can already protect them against combined discrimination.



So we are going to give people more information about the law.

The Public Sector Equality Duty



The **Public Sector Equality Duty** is a law that says public authorities and non-public bodies that do work for the public must make sure:

- Their services are fair.



- They treat their employees fairly.



Non-public bodies are organisations that are not owned or run by the government.



This rule is very important for making sure we are always trying to be fair.

We have written information to explain:



- Who needs to follow this rule.



- What they must do.



You can read this information here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities

Other work we have done



We have also got evidence and information from **research**.

Research is when people collect information to help them think about problems and find ways to fix them.

We have looked into:



- How to stop people being paid unfairly at work.



- People who are paid unfairly because of their race or disability.

We have also looked into:



- How women do not get paid as much as men.



- Combined discrimination.



We have written reports about each of these issues.

This will help us to decide how to work on them in the future.

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