



Borderwise:

Human Rights, Equality & Discrimination

Everyone who lives or works in Northern Ireland has the same rights under equality and anti-discrimination laws. This factsheet outlines UK legislation relating to Human Rights and Equality as well as organisations which have been established to protect and promote these rights



Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act came into force in Northern Ireland on 2nd October 2000. The Act incorporates into UK domestic law certain provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Human Rights Act makes the European Convention binding at national level, so UK citizens can instigate complaints and proceedings in their local courts if they believe their rights have been violated by a public authority.



Under the Act everyone in the UK has the following rights;

- The right to life
- Freedom from torture and degrading treatment
- Freedom from slavery and forced labour
- The right to liberty
- The right to a fair trial
- The right not to be punished for something that wasn't a crime when you did it
- The right to respect for private and family life
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of assembly and association
- The right to marry or form a civil partnership and start a family
- The right not to be discriminated against in respect of these rights and freedoms
- The right to own property
- The right to an education
- The right to participate in free elections

The Human Rights Act aims to ensure that these basic human rights are respected and enforced in the UK. It places an obligation on public authorities to ensure that rights are promoted and to investigate breaches of convention rights. Human Rights legislation is complex and where you feel your rights have been abused it is important to seek specialist advice. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission can provide advice on what options are available.

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) was set up in 1999 to help protect and promote human rights. The Commission is an independent, statutory organisation which works impartially to ensure that the human rights of everyone in Northern Ireland are protected.

Going
North

Where human rights violations have occurred, the NIHRC can:

- Provide advice to individuals
- Investigate complaints
- Assist individuals to bring legal proceedings
- Bring proceedings as an organisation in its own right
- Intervene as a third party in legal proceedings

Further information is available online at: www.nihc.org

Equality Commission of Northern Ireland

The Equality Commission's task is to use its powers to enforce Northern Ireland's equality legislation on disability, gender, racial equality, sexual orientation, age and equal pay. In addition it has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the statutory duty on public authorities concerning equality of opportunity and good relations arising from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Further information is available online at: www.equalityni.org

The Equality Commission can provide advice and assistance to clients who feel they have been discriminated against on the grounds of:

- Colour
- Race
- Nationality or ethnic or national origins, including belonging to the Irish Traveller community
- Religious belief
- Political opinion
- Sexual orientation
- Married status
- Disability
- Unequal pay
- Gender

Equality legislation covers many aspects of our daily lives such as employment, training, education, housing, the delivery of goods, facilities and services and the policies of public authorities. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has overall responsibility for the legislation and has a wide range of functions including the provision of information, advice, advocacy and assistance to people who they believe they may have been discriminated against.



Contact Details

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