

# Your rights at work

## Easy Read Guide



## What is the Equality and Human Rights Commission?



The Equality and Human Rights Commission works to make sure that people are treated fairly and equally.

We are working to stop **discrimination** against disabled people, men and women and people from different races and cultures.

### **Discrimination**

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.

We are also working to make sure that people of different ages, **lesbian** and **gay** people and people from different religions are treated fairly and equally.

### **Lesbian and gay**

**Lesbian** means a woman who is attracted to other women. **Gay** means a man who is attracted to other men.

We also want to make sure that people's **human rights** are respected.

### **Human rights**

Basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world.

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## Welcome to this guide



My name is Anne McGuire. I am the Minister for Disabled People. My job is to make sure disabled people are treated fairly.

The Government has made the law stronger to make sure disabled people are treated fairly at work.

This book explains how the law helps people with learning disabilities. It tells you about changes you can ask for to make getting a job easier. It tells you about changes you can ask for when you already have a job.

In this book some people with learning disabilities say what happened to them when they asked for changes.

I hope you will use this book and learn how the law can help you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne McGuire".

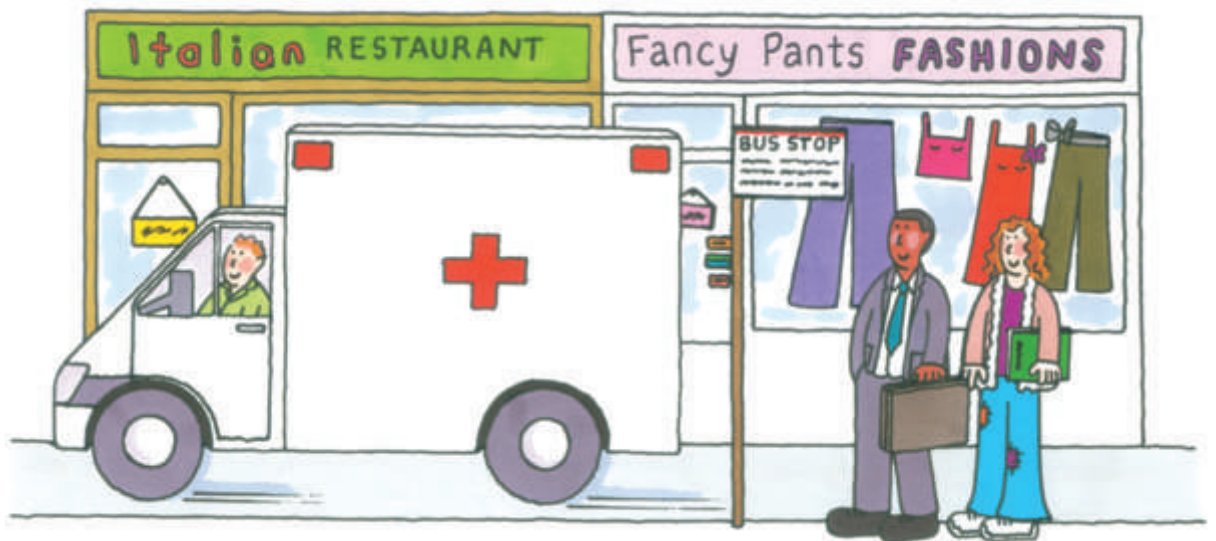
Anne McGuire, Minister for Disabled People  
Department for Work and Pensions

## How the law can help you at work

The Disability Discrimination Act is a law that says that disabled people must be treated fairly.

These are some of the places where disabled people must be treated fairly.

Shops  
Restaurants  
Hospitals  
Colleges  
Work



Disabled people sometimes find things harder than other people. They might find it harder to apply for a job, or to do a job.



The law says that employers must try to make changes if a disabled person needs them.

An employer doesn't always have to make changes. Sometimes the changes might be too difficult. But they should always think about how to make changes. They should always try to find a way to make things fair.

Sometimes an employer says a change costs too much money. They may be able to get help from the Government to pay for the change.

## How can I ask an employer to make changes?

You can ask for changes at different times.

When you go for an interview

When the employer offers you the job

After you start your job



Sometimes, making changes means you do the job better. This will be good for you. It will be good for your employer too.



Your employer might not know all about the law. You can show your employer this book. You can tell them to ring the Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline. The phone number is at the end of this book.

## Getting a fair interview



This is what happened when Hussain went for an interview.

### **Hussain's story**

I work for Xerox as a finisher. That means I have to make papers into a book. I started here in August 2005.

I find job interviews hard because I get nervous. I was pleased that I was allowed to have a **supporter** at my interview with Xerox.

The questions they asked me in the interview were quite easy. They asked me about what I did in my last job.

They brought me to the print room and showed me how to do the job. I showed them how I would do it and they were pleased with how I did it.

They offered me the job on an 8 week trial period to see how I got on. Then they took me on as a part time person and now they have made me a full time person.

I think employers should do this. For people with a learning disability like me, it means that I can show what I can do.

Before I worked here I applied to over 100 places. They said they would contact me and no one ever contacted me.

I was getting fed up. I think Xerox gave me a fair chance.

## How you can get a fair interview

- Tell the employer about your learning disability.
- If you want you can ask for a **supporter** to come to the interview with you.

### Supporter

A supporter helps you to say what you want to say. You can ask a friend, relative or care worker to be your supporter.



- Ask for the interview to be longer than usual. This gives you and your supporter time to explain things.
- Ask for a test to show what you can do.
- Ask for a **work trial**.

### **Work trial**

The employer lets you try the job for about 8 weeks. This gives you a chance to show that you can do the job.

### **Remember!**

An employer can't refuse to give you an interview just because you are disabled. This could be against the law.



You can call the Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline for more information. The phone number is at the end of this book.

## Asking for changes to a job



Nicky asked for some changes to make his job easier.

### **Nicky's story**

I have been working at Royal Mail since June 2005. I am a postman. I told Royal Mail that I had a learning disability so they made some changes to the job for me.

I do my round and work at a post office near where I live to make it easier. I found it easy to learn the route and I know the area because it's where I live.

Royal Mail gets people to help me in the office if I need it.

I enjoy meeting different people. I enjoy my job and I want to stay.

I think disabled people should have a fair chance at a job. It's important for employers to make changes. The changes they have made have helped me.

## How to ask for changes to a job

- Tell your employer about your learning disability.
- In some jobs there are hard parts and easy parts. You can ask your employer if you can just do the easy parts. Someone else can do the hard parts.
- You can ask if you can do some parts of your job in a different way.

### **Remember!**

An employer must think about making changes to a job if you find something hard because you are disabled. This is the law.



You can call the Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline for more information. The phone number is at the end of this book.

## Asking for different work

Sometimes you might find your job is too easy. You might want a chance to try different work, to see if you can do it. Sometimes doing different work is more interesting.

This is what happened to Nicola.



### Nicola's story

I have been working at London Borough of Sutton for 4 years. I work full time in a call centre. I have to answer phone calls.

I take calls from other workers. I also take calls from the public.

I started off by just taking work calls. I wanted a change so I asked my manager if I could take some calls from the public as well.

I also train other people on how to do my job. I really enjoy training other people. I got a pay rise when I started to do this work because it was a new part of the job.

I am working for an award called the Institute of Customer Services award. It means you have to think about how you have worked with people and different ways you can work better.

I started it just over a year ago. My manager is giving me more time to complete it. Then there will be an interview to talk about the things I've learned.

I think the award will make me better at doing my job. I would then like to move to the next level in my job.

## How to ask for different work

- Tell your employer that you would like to try new things.
- Ask for changes to training to make it easier for you to take part and learn new things.
- Ask for meetings where you talk about the new things you are learning.
- Ask if you can do a small piece of work first to see if you can do it.

### **Remember!**

An employer cannot refuse to give you a chance to do different work and earn more money just because you are disabled. This could be against the law.



You can call the Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline for more information. The phone number is at the end of this book.

## What to do if your employer doesn't treat you fairly

Sometimes you can ask an employer to treat you fairly, but they don't do it.

You might be able to take them to court. If the court decides that the employer has not treated you fairly, the employer has to pay you money.

This is what happened to Brian.



### Brian's story

I got a job in a fast food restaurant working in the kitchen. Before I started the job I told my employer that I had a learning disability. I said this means I find numbers difficult. My employer agreed that my job would be to **only** work in the kitchen.

When I started work, my boss changed his mind and said I should try working on the tills. I was worried about this and explained to them that I would be no good. I didn't want to get into trouble or lose my job so I worked on the tills, like I was told.

As soon as I started working on the tills, I made mistakes. I got into trouble with my boss because I took the wrong money for food. After this happened a few times, I got sacked.

I was very upset and thought it wasn't fair.

We took my employers to court.

On the day of the court case, my employers asked if I would accept some money instead of carrying on with the court case. I agreed to this. This means that the court case was stopped before anybody won or lost.



## What to do if your employer doesn't treat you fairly

- Ask to meet your employer. You can take a supporter with you.
- Talk about the problems you have at work.
- Say how you think changes to the job might help. You can show your employer this book.
- At the end of the meeting ask your employer to write down what you agreed.

If the problem isn't sorted out, you should write this in a letter to your employer. A supporter can help you with this.

- The letter should say what the problem is.
- It should say you think you are being treated unfairly because you are disabled.



- It should say you had a meeting to talk about the problem but nothing has changed.
- It should say you want to meet again to solve the problem.

Your employer should write back. They should ask you to have another meeting. They should try to solve the problem.

If the problem still isn't solved, you should call the Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline. The number is at the end of this book. They can help you to decide whether you should go to court.

**Remember!**

If an employer says they will make changes for you because of your disability, they **must** make those changes.

You could take your employer to court if they don't make the changes they have agreed to.

## Getting advice

Here are some groups which give people with learning disabilities advice about work. Some groups also give disabled people jobs. Other groups give different kinds of help.



### **Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline**

You can speak to someone by calling one of our Helplines. Please see the back cover for the numbers to use.

You can also write to us. **You do not need to put a stamp on the envelope.**



### **England**

If you live in England you can write to:

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
Helpline

FREEPOST RRLG-GHUX-CTRZ

Arndale House

The Arndale Centre

Manchester M4 3AQ



### **Scotland**

If you live in Scotland you can write to:

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
Helpline

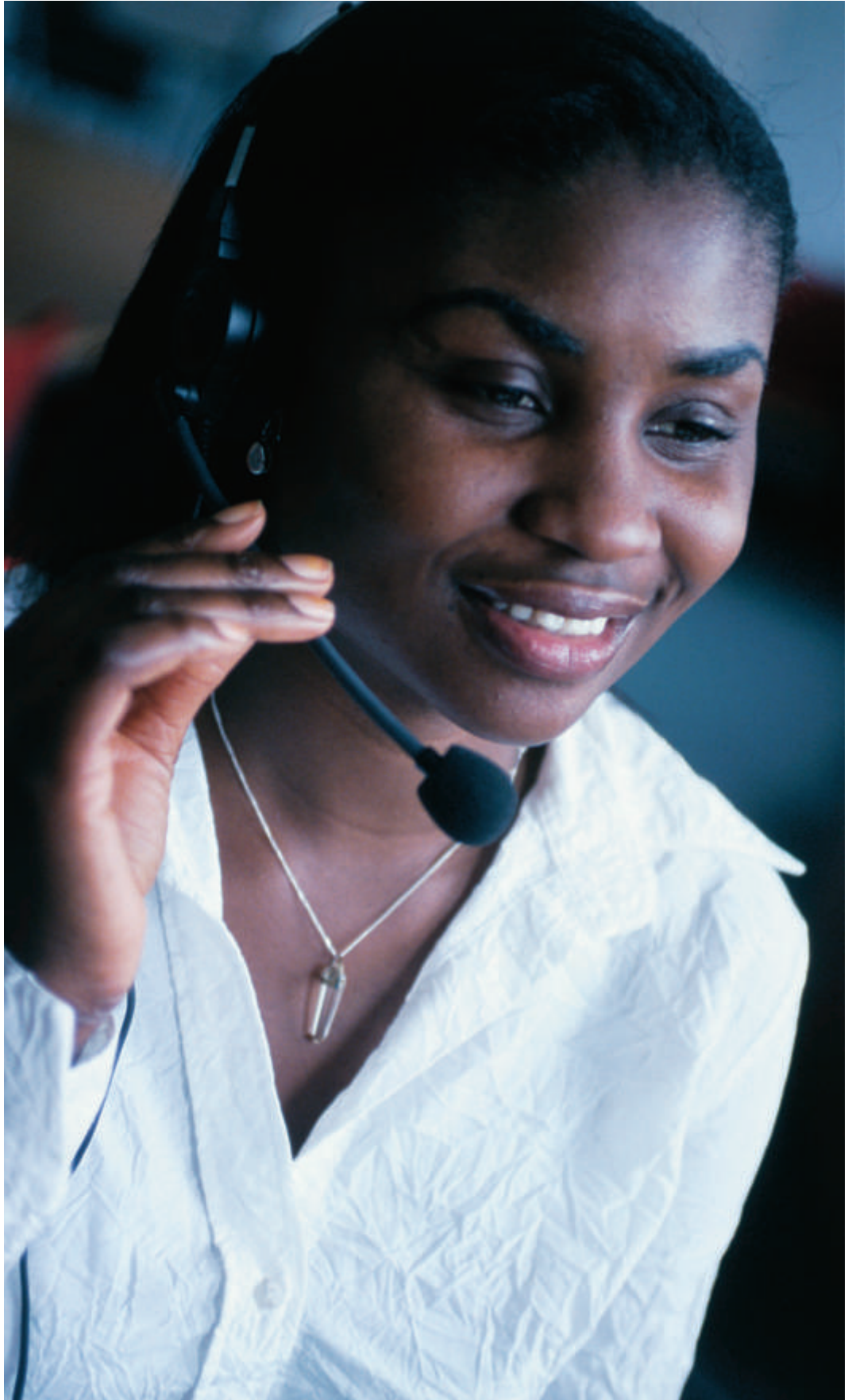
FREEPOST RRLG-GYLB-UJTA

The Optima Building

58 Robertson Street

Glasgow G2 8DU







## **Wales**

If you live in Wales you can write to:  
Equality and Human Rights Commission  
Helpline  
FREEPOST RRLR-UEYB-UYZL  
3rd Floor  
3 Callaghan Square  
Cardiff CF10 5BT



## **The Learning Disability Helpline – run by Mencap (England only)**



Telephone: 08088 081 111  
Textphone: 08088 088 181  
Email: [help@mencap.org.uk](mailto:help@mencap.org.uk)  
Fax: 0121 707 3019

You can contact the Helpline 24 hours a day.  
If no one is there to take your call, you can leave  
a message and they will call you back later.



If you'd like to write to the Helpline you can  
send a letter to this address:

Learning Disability Helpline  
123 Golden Lane  
London  
EC1Y 0RT

## People First

People First give information on **self advocacy**.

### Self advocacy

This means learning how to say what you think at work or in meetings.

Central England People First Limited  
PO Box 5200  
Northampton  
NN1 1ZB



Telephone: 01536 515548  
Email: [northants@peoplefirst.org.uk](mailto:northants@peoplefirst.org.uk)  
Website: [www.peoplefirst.org.uk](http://www.peoplefirst.org.uk)



### Valuing People

Email: [valuing.people.info@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:valuing.people.info@dh.gsi.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.valuingpeople.gov.uk](http://www.valuingpeople.gov.uk)

### Down's Syndrome Association

Langdon Down Centre  
2a Langdon Park  
Teddington  
TW11 9PS



Telephone: 08452 300 372  
Fax: 08452 300 373  
Email: [info@downs-syndrome.org.uk](mailto:info@downs-syndrome.org.uk)  
Website: [www.downs-syndrome.org.uk](http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk)



## **Advocacy Resource Exchange (ARX)**

Advocacy Resource Exchange helps people to find an **advocate** if they need one.

### **Advocate**

An advocate is like a supporter.

162 Lee Valley Techno Park  
Ashley Road  
London N17 9LN

Telephone: 020 8880 4545

Fax: 020 8880 4113

Email: [arx@advocacyresource.net](mailto:arx@advocacyresource.net)

Website: [www.advocacyresource.net](http://www.advocacyresource.net)

## **Enable Scotland (Scotland only)**

Enable Scotland helps people with a learning disability to have a say in the decisions which affect them.

6th Floor  
7 Buchanan Street  
Glasgow  
G1 3HL

Telephone: 0141 226 4541

Fax: 0141 204 4398

Email: [enable@enable.org.uk](mailto:enable@enable.org.uk)

Website: [www.enable.org.uk](http://www.enable.org.uk)

## **British Association for Supported Employment (BASE)**

The British Association for Supported Employment can tell you about **supported employment agencies** and how they can help you.

### **Supported employment agencies**

Supported employment agencies give jobs to disabled people. They give them extra support.

24 Ribchester Drive  
Bury BL9 9JT

Telephone: 01452 783596  
Email: [admin@base-uk.org](mailto:admin@base-uk.org)  
Website: [www.base-uk.org](http://www.base-uk.org)

This booklet was written with Mencap.

#### **It is supported by the following organisations:**

Care Services Improvement Partnership

Down's Syndrome Association

Employers' Forum on Disability

People First

Valuing People Support Team

# Words list

These are some of the words we use in this book.

## **Advocate**

An advocate is like a supporter.

## **Discrimination**

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.

## **Human rights**

Basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world.

## **Lesbian and gay**

**Lesbian** means a woman who is attracted to other women. **Gay** means a man who is attracted to other men.

## **Self advocacy**

This means learning how to say what you think at work or in meetings.

## **Supported employment agencies**

Supported employment agencies give jobs to disabled people. They give them extra support.

## **Supporter**

A supporter helps you to say what you want to say. You can ask a friend, relative or care worker to be your supporter.

## **Work trial**

The employer lets you try the job for about 8 weeks. This gives you a chance to show that you can do the job.



You can find out more about us by going to our website: [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

You can ask us about how we can help you by using the Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline. There are different numbers for England, Scotland and Wales.



### England

**Telephone** 08456 046 610  
**Textphone** 08456 046 620  
**Fax** 08456 046 630



### Scotland

**Telephone** 08456 045 510  
**Textphone** 08456 045 520  
**Fax** 08456 045 530



### Wales

**Telephone** 08456 048 810  
**Textphone** 08456 048 820  
**Fax** 08456 048 830



The Helplines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, except Wednesday 9am to 8pm