

Increasing voluntary sector influence

Module 8 – Equalities issues

Factsheet – History of equality legislation in the UK

Anti-discrimination and equality legislation has developed over 50 years. Legislation has developed in response to demographic changes of society, pressures from society and communities, political movements and European Union compliance requirements.

The voluntary and community sector has been pivotal in campaigning for the advancement of equalities legislation.

This timeline provides an idea of how equalities legislation has developed.

- 1957 Treaty of Rome (1957) Article 119**
- 1965 Race Relations Act 1965**
- 1968 Race Relations Act 1968**
- 1970 Equal Pay Act 1970 (and amendments)**
- 1974 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**
- 1975 Sex Discrimination Act 1975**
- 1976 Race Relations Act 1976**
- 1986 Public Order Act 1986**
- 1991 Football Offences Act 1991**
- 1994 Race Relations (Remedies) Act 1994**
- 1995 Disability Discrimination Act 1995**
- 1996 Employment Rights Act 1996**
- 1997 Protection from Harassment Act 1997**
- 1998 Human Rights Act 1998**
- 1998 Crime and Disorder Act 1998**
- 1999 Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999**
- 1999 Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam 1999**
- 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**
- 2000 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2000)**
- 2002 Employment Act 2002**



- 2003 Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003**
- 2003 Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003**
- 2003 Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003**
- 2003 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003**
- 2004 Gender Recognition Act 2004**
- 2004 Civil Partnership Act 2004**
- 2005 Disability Discrimination Act 2005**
- 2005 Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations (2005)**
- 2006 Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006**
- 2006 Equality Act 2006**
- 2006 Race and Religious Hatred Act 2006**
- 2007 Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007**
- 2010 Equality Act 2010**

Although not often thought about in terms of equality legislation the Road Traffic Act of 1972 made the wearing crash helmets compulsory, so discriminating against Sikhs. This was dealt with when the Road Traffic Act 1988 when Sikhs were given exemption from wearing helmets. In the Employment Act 1989 Sikhs were also given exemption from wearing hard hats, e.g. in the construction industry

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