

Gypsies and Travellers - race discrimination

The **Equality Act 2010** says you mustn't be discriminated against because of your race. If you're a Gypsy or Traveller, you may be protected against race discrimination.

Discrimination which is against the Equality Act is unlawful. If you've experienced unlawful discrimination, you may be able to do something about it.

Read this page to find out more about when you're protected against race discrimination if you're a Gypsy or a Traveller.

What's meant by race?

The **Equality Act** says it's only unlawful discrimination if you're treated unfairly because of certain reasons. These reasons are called **protected characteristics**. Race is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

It's race discrimination if you're treated unfairly because of one of the following things:

- colour
- nationality
- **ethnic origin**
- national origin.

Some Gypsies and Travellers are protected against discrimination on the basis of their **ethnic origins**.

Are all Gypsies and Travellers protected against race discrimination?

The courts have said that Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are protected against race discrimination because they're ethnic groups under the Equality Act.

If you've moved into settled accommodation

If you're a Romany Gypsy or Irish Traveller, you're still protected against discrimination even if you've moved into settled accommodation.

What's an ethnic group?

The law says an ethnic group is a group who share the same history and cultural traditions. In addition, the group may share one or more of the following things:

- the same language
- the same religion
- the same literature
- the same geographical origin
- being an oppressed group
- being a minority.

It's the courts who decide who can be an ethnic group. Gypsies and Travellers who have not been recognised as ethnic groups by the courts, are not currently protected against race discrimination under the Equality Act.

Who are Gypsies and Travellers?

The travelling community is a term used to describe people with a nomadic lifestyle, known usually as Gypsies and Travellers.

The travelling community includes:

- Romany Gypsies
- Irish Travellers
- Scottish Gypsies and Travellers
- Welsh Gypsies and Travellers
- New Travellers or New Age Travellers
- barges and other people living in boats
- fairground and circus families, known as travelling showmen.

What can you do about discrimination?

If you've been discriminated against, you can do something about it. You can take action under the Equality Act by making a complaint to the person or organisation who's discriminated against you or you can make a discrimination claim in the courts.

Next steps

- [Race discrimination](#)
- [What are the different types of discrimination?](#)

Other useful information

Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS)

If you have experienced discrimination, you can get help from the EASS discrimination helpline.

[More about the EASS helpline](#)

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

You can find useful information about discrimination on the EHRC website at www.equalityhumanrights.com