

Age discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 says you mustn't be discriminated against because of your age. Discrimination which is against the Equality Act is unlawful. If you've experienced unlawful discrimination, you may be able to do something about it.

What's meant by age?

If you want to make a discrimination claim, you need to find out if you're someone who mustn't be discriminated against under the **Equality Act 2010**.

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

Age discrimination is where you're treated unfairly because of your age or because you're part of a particular age group.

What's meant by age group?

Age group means people of the same age or people in a particular age range.

Here are some examples of age groups.

You're 25 years old. You could belong to one of the following age groups:

- 25 year olds
- under 30s
- over 20s
- people in their 20's
- young adults.

You're 78 years old. You could belong to one of the following age groups:

- 78 year olds
- over 70s
- pensioners
- senior citizens.

Example

You're 70 and you've been refused entry to a gym because of your age. This is unlawful discrimination.

Discrimination because of someone else's age

It's unlawful to discriminate against you because of the age of someone you're with or someone you know. This could be a parent, child, partner or friend.

This is called **discrimination by association**.

Example

You've booked a holiday for you and your mum, who's in her sixties, to go on an organised walking trip to Wales. When the organisers find out your mum's age they say you can't go because your mum is too old to keep up with the rest of the group. This could be unlawful discrimination against you and your mum because of her age.

Age discrimination because of who someone thinks you are

It's unlawful if someone discriminates against you because they think you belong to a certain age group even though you don't. This is called **discrimination by perception**.

Example

You're in your late 30s but you look a lot younger. You were hoping to represent your firm at a prestigious conference later in the year. Your employer has decided to send a colleague of yours instead. He says that although you have the necessary experience he wants someone more mature looking. Your colleague has the same experience as you and is in fact slightly younger, although he doesn't look it. This could be unlawful discrimination because of your perceived age.

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