

Equality and  
Human Rights  
Commission

[equalityhumanrights.com](http://equalityhumanrights.com)



# Ours to own

## Your human rights

A booklet about human rights  
and what they mean for you

Easy read

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# Introduction

**By Francesca Klug**

From the Equality and Human Rights Commission



You can find a lot of information about human rights but it is not always easy to understand.

It can be hard to see how human rights can be part of your life.

This booklet tells you about some human rights and how they can help you.



In this booklet you will read about how people have used human rights laws.



We are making a lot of our information into easy read so that everyone can understand more about human rights and the law.

There is information at the end of this booklet about how to contact us and get our easy read booklets.

# 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** 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** 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** are basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world.

# What is the Human Rights Act?



The Human Rights Act is the law about human rights.

Many other laws have to follow what the Human Rights Act says.



Human rights are about how we treat each other.

They are about

- respect
- freedom
- equality
- dignity
- fairness.

The Human Rights Act protects everyone.

## The human rights we talk about in this booklet are



**The right to life** – this means that your life is as important as anyone else's.



**The right to respect for private and family life** – this means the right to live as a family. For example, for gay and lesbian couples to have the same rights as other couples.



**The right to dignity and being part of the community** – this means that you should get the care and support you need to have a good life.

You should also be able to join in with things in your community along with everyone else.

## Some facts about human rights

Human rights are for everyone.



They are to help groups like councils, the police and hospitals protect you by making sure they respect your human rights.



Human rights mean that the government should protect all of us from groups or individuals who would take away our rights.



Now read 3 stories about how people have used their human rights

Each story shows how human rights helped someone.

The names of the people in the stories have been changed.

## Right to life

Your life is as important as anyone else's.



### Nina's story

Nina is 10. She has a disability. She became very ill and had to go into hospital.

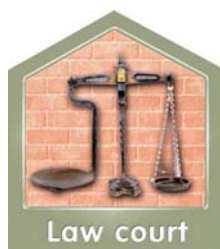
The doctors would not put her on a machine to help her breath. They also decided that if she stopped breathing they would not try to save her life.

Her mother was very unhappy about this.



Nina was moved to another hospital. The new hospital put her on a machine to help her breath for 2 weeks.

She got better and went home from hospital.



The Disability Rights Commission (which is now part of the Equality and Human Rights Commission) took the first hospital to court.

They used the right to life to argue that, even though Nina had a disability, she had the same right to care and treatment as everyone else.



## Respect for private and family life

The right to live as a family. For example, for gay and lesbian couples to have the same rights as other couples.



### Sarah's story

Sarah is Judy's partner. Judy had problems with her mental health and was taken into hospital.

If you have mental health problems and cannot make decisions for yourself, your nearest relative can make them for you.



Because Sarah was a woman, for her to be Judy's nearest relative she needed to have lived with her for 5 years. She had lived with Judy for 3 years.

If Sarah had been a man, she would have been seen as Judy's nearest relative after living with her for just 6 months.

Sarah argued that the right to respect for private and family life meant that she and Judy should not be treated differently from other couples.



The law about nearest relative was changed because of Sarah going to court. The amount of time is now the same for all couples.

## The right to dignity and the right to be part of the community

You should get the care and support you need to have a good life. You should also be able to join in with things in your community along with everyone else.

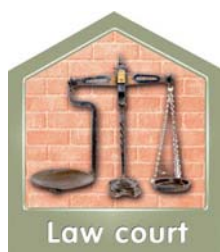


**Mary and Jean** are sisters. They are both disabled. They live at home with their parents.



They need help to move around their home and go out.

The local authority said it was too risky for their staff to lift and move Mary and Jean. This meant that the sisters could not move or go out.



Their case went to court. The judge said that all disabled people have the right to be supported to be a part of their local community.

He said that the local authority must look at its rules about lifting and moving people.

The local authority changed its rules to respect the dignity and rights of people who need to be lifted.

# Find out more about us and your rights

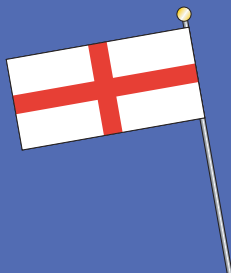


from our website  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)



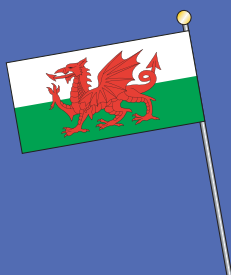
Telephone 1 of our helplines.

- They are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.
- On Wednesdays the helplines stay open until 8pm.



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