

## **Discrimination – Advice in BSL**

### **Introduction**

Hello and welcome to this Citizens Advice BSL film about discrimination.

In this film we focus on the rights of Deaf people but these rights are the same whatever your disability and of course discrimination can also happen because of:

- age
- transgender
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy or maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- sex

We tell you what to do if you feel you have been treated unfairly at work, out and about or in education.

### **What is discrimination?**

Discrimination happens when someone is treated worse than other people because they have a particular identity or they're part of a particular group.

If you've got a problem with being treated worse than other people for example because you are Deaf, you have rights under the Equality Act 2010 to do something about it. You can get more information from your local CAB office or from the Equality and Human Rights Commission website: [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com).

### **What rights do I have?**

Here are some of the rights you have.

#### **Employment**

- an employer must not treat you worse than other people if you're looking for work or apply for a job with them
- usually, an employer shouldn't ask you questions about your disability or health before offering you a job
- your employer must not bully you or let other people bully you because you're Deaf
- your employer must not treat you worse than other people or bully you because of a connection you have with a Deaf or disabled person. This might be, for example, if you have a Deaf child
- your employer must not treat you worse than other people because you've made a complaint about how you've been treated.

Sometimes disabled people have difficulties with parts of their work because of their disability. The law says that your employer must make changes to help you do your job. These are called reasonable adjustments.

## **Reasonable adjustments**

At work, reasonable adjustments might be things like:

- being allowed to work flexible hours
- having a BSL interpreter for meetings
- allowing you to work from home sometimes
- moving you to a different job.

Out and about, reasonable adjustments might include:

- the solicitor providing a BSL interpreter
- a theatre providing a BSL interpreter for a play
- access for disabled people to the gym or swimming pool
- a private club putting in a hearing loop.

Sometimes it may be too difficult or expensive for an employer to make changes to help Deaf or disabled people. In these cases the law says they might not have to. But employers must always try their best to find a way to help you. Help may be available through the government's Access to Work scheme.

## **Access to Work**

The government wants to make it easier for disabled people to get good jobs. If you're looking for a job your local Jobcentre Plus can help you. They can also help if you need changes or reasonable adjustments to be made at work because of your disability, through a scheme called Access to Work.

The Access to Work scheme gives money to disabled people in work or about to start work to help them buy equipment or make changes at work so they can do their job. For example, if you need a new computer so that you can do your job, Access to Work might be able to help pay for this. They also help to pay for things disabled people need at interview, for example a BSL interpreter.

If you have a problem with how your employer is treating you, you might be able to take action about it. You can find out more about the action you can take in our BSL film about employment and your workplace rights.

## **Access to Services**

Sometimes Deaf people find that there are difficulties when they try to use a service or get information about a service.

Services are provided by organisations that help us by selling or giving us things we want or need. These include places like shops, hotels, gyms, transport, professional services like solicitors, and private clubs.

People who provide services shouldn't refuse you a service or give you a worse service because you're Deaf or disabled. They also shouldn't treat you worse because you've made a complaint about how you've been treated.

For example, a Deaf person who needs to see a solicitor might need a BSL interpreter. Sometimes solicitors won't hire an interpreter because they think it can be too expensive, or that you can manage with a pen and paper. Sometimes they tell clients to come in with a friend or relative. But the law says that service providers have to make reasonable adjustments so that Deaf people can use their services.

Sometimes organisations can't make the changes that Deaf people would like. This might be because it might cost a lot of money or be very difficult. This can be hard for small organisations that don't have a lot of money. In these cases the law says that organisations don't always have to make all the changes we would like, but they must do their best within reason to be accessible to disabled people.

The law also says that public organisations like the council, social services or hospitals have a special responsibility to make sure they don't treat disabled people worse than other people. Public organisations must work with disabled people when they make their plans.

### **At school, college or university**

You have rights about how you should be treated at school, college or university.

Schools should make it easier for you or your child to take a full part in school life. For example, if you or your child needs special equipment or help because you or they are disabled, the school should provide this, as long as it's reasonable. Schools should also provide an interpreter for Deaf parents if you have to go to a meeting about your child.

The college or university should make reasonable changes to make sure you can do your course and use the university services. For example, this might be by providing special equipment, or an Interpreter or communication support worker.

### **What can I do if I've been discriminated against?**

If you think you've been treated unfairly or discriminated against, always try and give the organisation the chance to sort out the issue and make reasonable adjustments.

If you feel comfortable, you can try and resolve the situation on the spot, but if you don't, make your point in writing. Keep a copy of the letter and make sure it has the date and the time the event happened. Send the letter first class and get make sure you get a certificate of posting. This is free from the post office.

If this doesn't work, you can make an appointment to see a Citizens Advice adviser. We can:

- advise you of your rights
- write a complaint letter and try and resolve the problem with a service provider
- if there is no response or resolution, we can try and take the case further, and make more people aware
- we can, in certain situations and if you want to, help you find a lawyer to take the case to court

Our aim is not just about taking legal action – we want to help you to resolve the situation in the best way for you.

Don't leave your concern too long. The time limit for some types of cases is as short as 3 months from the date the incident happened. It is best to seek advice as soon as possible if you have a concern about the way you have been treated.

### **To sum up**

Discrimination can happen in lots of different ways. It means being treated worse than other people because you have a particular identity or you are part of a particular group.

If you think you've been discriminated against for any reason, there are laws that can help you. The Equality Act gives you rights to take action if you've been treated worse than other people.

If you want to take action about how you're being treated, there are lots of organisations that can help you. Citizens Advice has helped more than 16,000 clients over the past year with discrimination problems, so don't worry if you just want to get advice about a possible discrimination case. We're here to help.

You could also try contacting the Equality Advisory Support Service have a look at:  
[www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/)

You can find out lots more information about discrimination and your rights on our website at:  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) where you'll also find you local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

You can find out more about how your CAB works in our BSL film Introducing your citizens advice bureaux.

We also have BSL videos on the following topics:

Workplace rights

Consumer

Debt

Welfare benefits

Gender violence and domestic abuse

Hate incidents and crimes

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