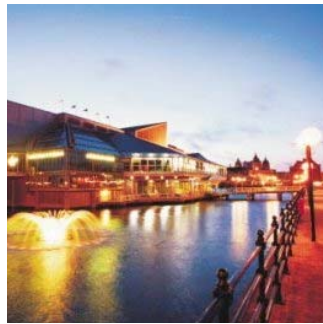


Religious Discrimination

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INTRODUCTION

Under the **Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003**, it is illegal to discriminate against people in employment or vocational training on the basis of their religions or beliefs.

The legislation was widened through the **Equality Act 2006**. It included the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises, and the exercise of public functions.

LEGISLATION

- ⇒ Religious discrimination regulations give protection against discrimination on the grounds of 'any religion, religious belief or philosophical belief'
- ⇒ The Equality Act 2006 also protected those with a 'lack of belief' as well.

The Regulations are applicable in all aspects of employment, including recruitment and terms and conditions, as well as in vocational training. It is deemed unlawful to unfavourably treat a person in employment and training on the grounds of religion or belief. This includes with regards to;

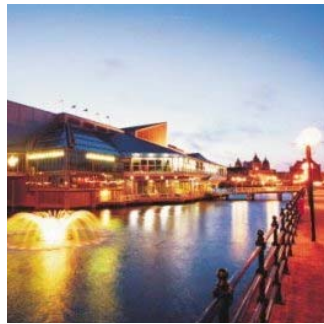
- ⇒ The perception of someone's belief or religion
- ⇒ The connection or association with a person of a particular religion or belief
- ⇒ The refusal to comply with a discriminatory instruction
- ⇒ The religion or belief of a person

It is unlawful under these regulations to;

- ⇒ Discriminate directly
- ⇒ Discriminate indirectly
- ⇒ Subject someone to harassment
- ⇒ Victimise an individual if they make or intend to make a complaint or allegation
- ⇒ Discriminate of harass after a working relationship has terminated

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EXEMPTIONS TO THE LAW

Genuine Occupational Requirements (GOR)

- ⇒ When it is necessary to be part of a particular religion
- ⇒ There is an exemption for 'employers with an ethos/distinctive character based on a religion or belief'
- ⇒ Example; employing a Jewish individual for a position of a Jewish Chaplain would be classed a genuine occupational requirement

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Recruitment

- ⇒ Advertise to a wide audience
- ⇒ Only include essential selection criteria, i.e. do not include unnecessary working hours that could interfere with prayer times

Dietary Requirements

- ⇒ Ensure vegetarian food is served in a canteen (if applicable) and that there is a fridge available to store food

Leave

- ⇒ Try and accommodate annual leave for those who celebrate particular religious festivals or include a provision for unpaid leave.
- ⇒ One person of one religion should not have more accommodating or better terms and conditions than a person of another religion

Prayer

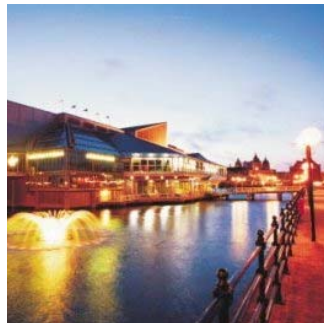
- ⇒ Provide a quiet room, if no prayer room available, for those who pray at specific times of day

Dress

- ⇒ Try and accommodate those who have certain dress requirements unless it conflicts with health and safety issues.
- ⇒ Flexibility should be built into work dress codes unless there is a genuine occupational requirement for not doing so

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION

HOME OFFICE;

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/racerelate7.html>

DIRECT GOV;

http://www.direct.gov.uk/Employment/Employees/DiscriminationAtWork/DiscriminationAtWorkArticles/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=10026449&chk=Co7Ovo

UNISON - Bargaining Support;

<http://www.unison.org.uk>

This is the sixth in a series of business factsheets on diversity and cohesion issues, which reflect priorities in ONE HULL's new Community Strategy.