

Sexual Orientation

It is against the law for an employer to discriminate against you because of your sexual orientation. You are also protected against harassment or bullying at work.

Under the law you should not be discriminated against because of your sexual orientation or 'perceived' sexual orientation - including orientation towards someone of the same sex (lesbian/gay), opposite sex (heterosexual) or both sexes (bisexual).

You should not be treated less favourably (for example, being refused employment) because of your sexual orientation or because an employer thinks you are of a certain sexual orientation.

If an employer gives benefits to opposite sex unmarried partners of its employees (e.g. the employees opposite sex partner is able to drive the company car), refusing the same benefits to same-sex partners could be discrimination.

Since December 2005, same-sex couples can register a civil partnership. A civil partner is entitled to the same benefits as a married person, for example, survivor's benefits under a company pension scheme.

Some employers ask for details of the sexual orientation of employees - either for monitoring purposes or as part of an equal opportunities questionnaire. However, you don't have to give this information.

If you think you've been discriminated against, victimised or harassed at work because of your sexual orientation, talk to your employer or personnel officer. If you belong to a trade union, you can contact your union representative. If you cannot resolve the matter informally, you can follow the grievance procedure in your contract of employment. Keep a written record of any harassment to show your employer.