

The Equality Act 2010

This protects all individuals in society from discrimination and guarantees certain rights.

The Act combined several earlier pieces of legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act which contains the legal obligation for employers, service providers and education providers to introduce 'reasonable adjustments' to enable people with additional needs or 'protected characteristics' to access these services without being disadvantaged.

Autism is one of these protected characteristics

The 9 protected characteristics:

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Gender reassignment
- ✓ Marriage and civil partnership
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Religion/belief
- ✓ Sex

Reasonable adjustments

Some people or organisations like employers, shops, local authorities and schools must take positive steps to remove the barriers disabled people face because of their disability. This is to ensure they receive the same services, as far as this is possible, as someone who's not disabled.

The Equality Act 2010 calls this the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

What's meant by the duty to make reasonable adjustments?

The Equality Act 2010 says changes or adjustments should be made to ensure you can access the following things if you're disabled:

- education
- employment
- housing
- goods and services eg. shops, banks, cinemas, hospitals, council offices, leisure centres
- associations and private clubs like the Scouts and Guides, private golf clubs and working men clubs.

You should never be asked to pay for reasonable adjustments

What is meant by reasonable?

Adjustments only have to be made if it's reasonable to do so. What's a reasonable thing to ask for depends on things like:

- your disability
- how practicable the changes are
- if the change you ask for would overcome the disadvantage you and other disabled people experience
- the size of the organisation
- how much money and resources are available
- the cost of making the changes
- if any changes have already been made.

What do people or organisations have to do?

There are three different things people or places of work may have to do make it easier for you to access or do something:

- Change the way things are done
- Change a physical feature
- Provide extra aids or services

When do people have to do these things?

Adjustments only have to be made if it's reasonable to do. The Equality Act says there's a duty to make reasonable adjustments if you're placed at a substantial disadvantage because of your disability compared with non-disabled people or people who don't share your disability.

What happens if someone doesn't cooperate with the duty to make reasonable adjustments?

If someone doesn't cooperate with their duty to make reasonable adjustments, the Equality Act says it's unlawful discrimination. You can ask the person or place of work to make the necessary changes. If they refuse, you can make a discrimination claim under the Equality Act.