

Learning Outcome

1. Understand the current framework for care within the UK

1.1 Explain the current legislation, guidance and Code of Practice which govern care within the UK.

1.2 Evaluate the impact that the current national framework has upon service users

The Equality Act (2010): Transcript

What is the Equality Act?

What is the Equality Act? This short video will give you a brief introduction to the principles of this important piece of legislation, and ask you to think about how it applies to your work in health and social care.

Laws and legislation can often be seen as a reflection of society, therefore it is not surprising that as society changes, laws around equality have also changed. In order to streamline and update many laws related to equality, the British government introduced the Equality Act in 2010. The main thing to understand about the Equality Act is that there are 9 protected areas or characteristics, meaning that it is illegal to discriminate against an individual or group of people on these grounds. The 9 protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Defining Discrimination

Of course, to understand the implications of this, we need to consider what it means to discriminate against someone.

Discrimination can be separated into direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs when a person or a group is treated unfairly on the basis of one of the 9 protected characteristics. Some examples of this could be if an employer advertises a job, but says that only people over a certain age can apply, or only men, or only women can apply. Or perhaps if someone applies for a job, but they are not considered for it because they have a disability. This concept of direct discrimination even extends to discrimination by perception, or discrimination by association. This means that someone could be treated unfairly just because another person *believes* that they have a particular protected characteristic, or that they have a close relationship with someone else who does.

Indirect discrimination, on the other hand, occurs when no one person or group is singled out for different treatment, but existing rules or policies that apply to everyone put certain groups at a disadvantage. For example, if a public building has steps, but no ramps or lifts, then this is indirect discrimination against wheelchair-users.

Health and Social Care and the Equality Act

Why is it important to know about the Equality Act in the field of health and social care? Well, it can be thought of as the backbone of ethics in the field, and it should inform every decision. Adhering to the principles of equality is vital in preserving dignity for people in care. The act also provides protection against discrimination for care-providers, service users, and their families. It encourages those working in care and support to look for gaps or shortcomings related to equality, and to act to improve those situations. Furthermore, care-workers have a professional responsibility to act to reduce discrimination, and also to correctly report any instances of inequality that they experience.

Citations and references

Finally, let's have a look at how to cite or reference the Equality Act, as you will need to write about this in your assignments.

In your text, decide if you are referring to the act in general, or to a specific piece of information in the act.

For a citation of the whole act, you simply need the name of the act and the year. Because parliamentary acts include the year as part of their name, you don't need to use a comma, but remember to write the whole thing in italics. For example:

...this is protected by law (*Equality Act 2010*).

If you need to refer to one specific piece of information within the act, you need to include the chapter number. You can find this information on the Government website, legislation.gov.uk. For example:

...rules about employees (*Equality Act 2010*, c39)

In your reference list at the end of your assignment, you need to include the title of the act and the chapter number, the website where you read it, and the date when you looked it up online. You should remember to write the name of the act in italics, and put the last part in brackets. For example:

Equality Act 2010, c39. Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> (Accessed 28 January 2021)

References

- https://www.scie.org.uk/key-social-care-legislation/equality-act?gclid=CjwKCAiA6aSABhApEiwA6Cbm_9sXdNY0V7QpdvZM4mlQQ0KFLQcRrzd-MXsJZHqG51PDPtGeLWvjWxoCgDwQAvD_BwE
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yue1glAllAs&ab_channel=EduCareLearningLtd
- <https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law/direct-and-indirect-discrimination>