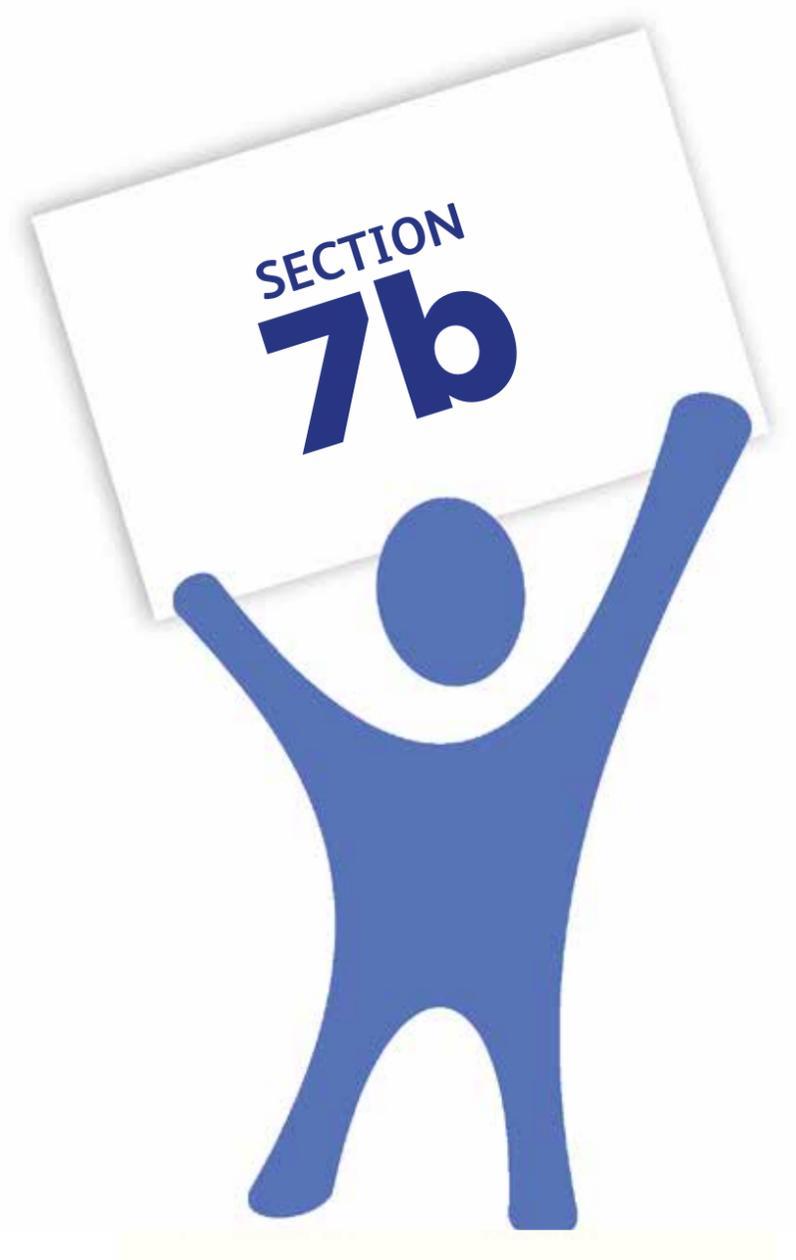




Marriage and Civil Partnership status



Civil partnerships between same-sex and opposite-sex (also termed mixed-sex) couples are now lawful throughout the United Kingdom.

Same-sex marriage is also lawful throughout the UK. (The bar on same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland was removed in February 2020.)

Discrimination because someone is in a marriage or civil partnership is unlawful.

Marriage and civil partnership discrimination is when you are treated differently at work because you are married or in a civil partnership.

Under the Equality Act, marriage and civil partnership means being legally married or in a civil partnership. People do not have this characteristic if they are single, divorced, engaged, or co-habiting.

There are three types of marriage and civil partnership discrimination.

Direct discrimination

This happens when you are treated worse than other workers in your workplace because you are married or in a civil partnership.

EXAMPLE: a woman works night shifts in a distribution warehouse but is dismissed when she gets married because her employer thinks a married woman should be at home in the evening

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination happens when an employer has a policy or way of working that puts people who are married or in a civil partnership at a disadvantage.

Such a policy is only permitted if the employer is able to show that there is a good reason for it and if the implementation of the policy is appropriate and necessary.

Victimisation

This is when you are treated badly because you have made a complaint of marriage or civil partnership-related discrimination. It can also occur if you are supporting someone who has made a complaint of marriage or civil partnership related discrimination.

Harassment is NOT a provision that applies to marriage/civil partnership status. However, if you are subjected to hostile, intimidating, humiliating, degrading or offensive treatment because you are married or a civil partner you may be able to bring a claim for direct discrimination, if you can show that you have been treated worse than others who are not married or in a civil partnership. Alternatively, you may be able to bring a claim for sexual orientation harassment.

Exceptions and exemptions

In some specific situations an employer can refuse to employ you because you are married or in a civil partnership if the work is for the purposes of an organised religion, for example as a Catholic priest (who are required to be celibate).

