



Young Equals is a group of charities and children who are campaigning to stop age discrimination.

The campaign is co-ordinated by the Children's Rights Alliance for England. Members of the steering group include the British Youth Council, The Children's Society, Families Need Fathers, National Children's Bureau, the National Youth Agency, NCVYS, NSPCC, Save the Children, UK Youth, Youth Access and YWCA England & Wales. 11 MILLION, the Children's Commissioner for England, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission have observer status.

STATEMENT FROM YOUNG EQUALS CAMPAIGN STEERING GROUP

The Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent on 8 April 2010. The Act, which brings together all existing discrimination legislation and extends protection from unfair treatment, explicitly excludes children and young people from legal protection from unfair discrimination on the grounds of age.

The Young Equals campaign group has been strongly lobbying for the inclusion of children and young people in the age discrimination measures in the Act. Since the announcement of the proposals in the Act in 2007, we have urged the Government to include the following measures:

- Legal protection for children and young people from unfair age discrimination in services and public functions
- The age element of the public sector equality duty to apply to children in all public sector settings – including all children's services and schools
- A requirement for reasonable adjustments to be made to enable equal access to public transport and public buildings for babies and young children.

During the Parliamentary journey of the Act, many MPs and Peers spoke out in favour of the inclusion of children and young people in the age discrimination provisions. We saw several lengthy debates in both Houses and attracted support from across the political spectrum. Despite the continued exclusion of children and young people from the ban on unfair age discrimination in goods and services, and the exclusion of children's homes and schools from the age element of the public sector equality duty, the Young Equals group, along with supportive MPs and Peers, has achieved the following through Parliamentary lobbying:

- Public assurances from Government during a debate in the House of Lords that the guidance on the public sector equality duty will give practical assistance to public service providers on how they can implement the age provisions for children and young people.ⁱ
- A public letter to Trevor Phillips, chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) from Baroness Royall calling for the EHRC to consider the impact of equality legislation on children as it carries out its statutory monitoring, and urging the Commission to consider what information children should receive on the Equality Act.ⁱⁱ

To complement our Parliamentary lobbying, Young Equals has carried out a wide range of activities aiming to raise awareness of and encourage people to take action on the issue of age discrimination:

- We have gathered direct testimonies describing children and young people's experiences of age discrimination. In August 2008 we held a 'Day of Action'

where children, young people and adults were invited to send us evidence of where under-18s have been treated unfairly because of their age.

- Children and young people's evidence of their experiences of age discrimination was summarised in the NGO submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Childⁱⁱⁱ. The Committee's concluding observations referred to '*the general climate of intolerance and negative public attitudes towards children, especially adolescents*' and included a strong recommendation that the UK Government '*ensure full protection against discrimination on any grounds*'.^{iv}
- In May 2009 we published [Making the case](#) – a document bringing together for the first time in one place evidence of children and young people's experiences of age discrimination in a range of public and private settings^v.
- We have raised awareness of children and young people's experiences of unfair age discrimination in Parliament and the wider public domain – with significant coverage of children's experiences of age discrimination in national and local press^{vi}.
- We have facilitated children and young people's self-advocacy on the issue of age discrimination, including supporting children and young people to speak in Parliament and at party conferences on the issue.
- Over the last 12 months, we have worked closely with the Department of Health to ensure its guidance on the Equality Act addresses children and young people's experiences of inequality on the grounds of age.
- We have raised awareness of harm caused by age discrimination to family life. Parents have told us about the daily challenges they face through discrimination by association. They have described the impact of buses driving past, refusing to allow on mothers with buggies and being asked to leave cafes – all because they are with their young children.

Although the Act has now received Royal Assent, we will be continuing to work on age discrimination. Young Equals will be:

- Seeking to ensure that any published guidance on the public sector equality duty addresses the experiences of children and young people with regard to unfair treatment on the basis of age
- Continuing to lobby on the EU Directive on Equal Treatment with a view to maintaining the proposed inclusion of under-18s in the age discrimination provisions
- Raising awareness of the harmful impact of age discrimination as experienced by children and young people and supporting children, young people and adults to take action on this issue.

For more information on the work of Young Equals:

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ⁱ House of Lords Equality Bill House of Lords Committee Stage Hansard 27 Jan 2010 : Column 1499
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100127-0014.htm#1001278000001>

ⁱⁱ Letter dated 22/03/2010 from Baroness Royall to Trevor Phillips (Chair, Equality and Human Rights Commission) regarding the Equality Bill's new public sector Equality Duty and children's rights. Deposited in the House of Lords Library on 22 March 2010

<http://www.parliament.uk/deposits/depositedpapers/2010/DEP2010-0762.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ CRAE (2008) *State of Children's Rights in England: Review of UK Government's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child - 2008*

^{iv} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2008) *Concluding Observations: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (CRC/C/GBR/CO/4)* paragraph 24-25

^v Young Equals (2009) *Making the case: Why children should be protected from age discrimination and how it can be done – proposals for the Equality Bill*

^{vi} For example: The Observer, 29 March 2009 'Discrimination 'a fact of life for British children'
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2009/mar/29/young-equals-equality-bill>