All people have equal value and rights. Do you feel that you have been discriminated against? Then you can report it to the Equality Ombudsman (DO). Are you working to ensure that everyone has equal rights and opportunities? The Equality Ombudsman can give you advice and suggest how to work towards ensuring that no one is discriminated against. Read more in this brochure.
The Equality Ombudsman
(Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO)
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This brochure can be ordered in various formats and in other languages from www.do.se.
The Equality Ombudsman –
a united force for human rights

The Equality Ombudsman (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO) is a government agency that works against discrimination and for equal rights and opportunities for everyone. Our vision is a society where respect for everyone’s equal value and rights is a matter of course.

The Equality Ombudsman was formed on 1 January 2009 when the four previous anti-discrimination ombudsmen were merged into a new body. The previous authorities were the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman (JämO), the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination (DO), the Disability Ombudsman (HO) and Ombudsman against Discrimination on grounds of Sexual Orientation (HomO).
This means that you can now turn to a single authority regardless of the reason why you have been discriminated against. You may also have been discriminated against for several reasons, for example because you are a woman from Iraq with a hearing disability, or because you are a young homosexual man with dyslexia.

On 1 January 2009 a new comprehensive Discrimination Act, which covers more areas than before, came into force. The Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age.

Our main task is to ensure that the anti-discrimination legislation is followed. The authority also works to ensure that the law for parental leave is followed and that people on parental leave aren’t treated less favourably at work.
How the Equality Ombudsman can help you

- Receive and investigate your discrimination complaints.
- Provide information on the rights protected by anti-discrimination legislation.
- Provide advice on how to assert your rights when you have been discriminated against.
- Represent you in court.
- Receive and investigate your complaint if you feel you have been treated less favourably because of parental leave.
- Provide advice on how to promote equal rights and prevent discrimination.
- Provide education on protection against discrimination.
More about the responsibilities of the Equality Ombudsman

The Equality Ombudsman also supervises how employers, universities and schools live up to the anti-discrimination legislation’s demands for measures to prevent discrimination. The Equality Ombudsman does this mostly by reviewing gender equality plans and equal treatment plans.

The Equality Ombudsman’s duties also include raising awareness and disseminating knowledge and information about discrimination and anti-discrimination legislation.

One important part of our work is to develop and provide useful methods to institutions such as employers and schools on how to prevent discrimination and promote equal rights.

It is also the Equality Ombudsman’s task to highlight and promote the development of the protection against discrimination. We can achieve this, for instance, by writing and publishing reports and by international cooperation.
Have you been discriminated against?

If you have been discriminated against you can report it to the Equality Ombudsman (DO). This is free of charge.

The anti-discrimination legislation protects you from discrimination at work, at school, at university, in shops and when you rent or buy a home. This protection also applies in a number of other areas of society, for example health and medical care, social services and the social insurance system.

You can report to the Equality Ombudsman if you feel that you have been discriminated against because of your sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnic origin, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age.

Discrimination can sometimes be related to several of these grounds at the same time. Discrimination can also be family-related, for example if your parents are homosexual or if your brother has a disability and you are discriminated against because of this. You can also report if you have been treated unfairly in connection with your parental leave.

**Discrimination**

Not everything that is experienced as unfair is discrimination as defined by the law. According to the law, discrimination can include being treated less favourably because of:

- Sex
- Transgender identity or expression
- Ethnicity
- Religion or other belief
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
Human rights – the current situation

Many people turn to the Equality Ombudsman because they feel they have been discriminated against. Here are a few examples from real life. (The names have been changed and the people on the pictures have nothing to do with these examples.)

- Mira was turned down for a job at an amusement park because she wears a headscarf.
- A same-sex couple wasn’t allowed to go to the school ball together.
- The landlord changed the locks and Roja, a pregnant Romani woman, and her three children were locked out of their apartment.
- Carl wasn’t admitted to a self-knowledge course because he is HIV positive.
- Sara was denied a job interview because she was pregnant.

From 1 January 2009, age and transgender identity or expression are also included in the anti-discrimination legislation. Two examples of this are:

- A teacher harasses Alex, who doesn’t want to be identified as a girl or a boy.
- Frank doesn’t get the job he applied for because he is over 55.

How to make a claim

Claims should be made in writing and include your name, address, phone number, preferably an e-mail address and the name of the person or institution you are reporting, for example the school, university, employer, company or authority. Also include why you feel that you have been discriminated against and how this relates to your age, your religion or your disability, for example.

Write a letter or fill in one of the claim forms that can be downloaded from www.do.se.
Your claim should be made promptly, because otherwise the right to bring legal action may expire and we won’t be able investigate it. You can find more information at www.do.se.

After we receive your claim we will often investigate it. The person or institution that has been reported is given the opportunity to give their version of the events. The Equality Ombudsman will then assess if and how your case should be pursued.

A claim can lead to redress. Sometimes it can also help other people. It is a human right to not be discriminated against.

**Things to consider when you make a complaint**

1. Complaints should be made in writing.
2. Complaints should be submitted promptly.
3. Write why you think you have been discriminated against, and on what grounds.
4. The Equality Ombudsman doesn’t take a position from the outset.
5. Protection differs according to the various areas.

**Speak out!**

If you are being treated badly, speak out! It is the employer, school or university that is responsible for ensuring that it doesn’t happen again. Your union can also help you at work.
Equal rights for everyone

Do you work to ensure that everyone has equal rights? You are right to do so. Employers, schools and universities have a responsibility to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities and that no one is discriminated against or harassed.

According to the law, employers with 25 or more employees must have an equality plan which is updated at least every three years. Employers must also systematically promote equal rights and opportunities in working life regardless of ethnicity, religion or other beliefs.

Schools and universities must produce equality plans that are followed up every year. Would you like suggestions and ideas for preventive work, or do you want to know more about what the legislation stipulates?

At the Equality Ombudsman’s website, www.do.se, you can find more information and more examples of what can be considered discrimination in different areas.
Contact the Equality Ombudsman

Would you like more information about protection from discrimination? Perhaps you would like advice from our lawyers for advice on how to make a complaint? Are you an employer or education manager who needs advice and support in your work to prevent discrimination? Contact the Equality Ombudsman (DO).

**Phone DO**
08-120 20 700 or 020-36 36 66 (no charge)
Text phone 08-120 20 820
Press phone 08-120 20 710

**Write to DO**
Diskrimineringsombudsmannen (DO)
Box 3686
103 59 Stockholm
Fax 08-120 20 800

**Visit the DO website**
www.do.se

**E-mail DO**
E-post do@do.se
The Equality Ombudsman, DO, works for the equal rights of all people and against discrimination on grounds of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnic origin, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age.