



Human Rights Act 1998

1998 CHAPTER 42

Other rights and proceedings

12 Freedom of expression.

- (1) This section applies if a court is considering whether to grant any relief which, if granted, might affect the exercise of the Convention right to freedom of expression.
- (2) If the person against whom the application for relief is made (“the respondent”) is neither present nor represented, no such relief is to be granted unless the court is satisfied—
 - (a) that the applicant has taken all practicable steps to notify the respondent; or
 - (b) that there are compelling reasons why the respondent should not be notified.
- (3) No such relief is to be granted so as to restrain publication before trial unless the court is satisfied that the applicant is likely to establish that publication should not be allowed.
- (4) The court must have particular regard to the importance of the Convention right to freedom of expression and, where the proceedings relate to material which the respondent claims, or which appears to the court, to be journalistic, literary or artistic material (or to conduct connected with such material), to—
 - (a) the extent to which—
 - (i) the material has, or is about to, become available to the public; or
 - (ii) it is, or would be, in the public interest for the material to be published;
 - (b) any relevant privacy code.
- (5) In this section—

“court” includes a tribunal; and

“relief” includes any remedy or order (other than in criminal proceedings).

Changes to legislation:

There are outstanding changes not yet made by the legislation.gov.uk editorial team to Human Rights Act 1998. Any changes that have already been made by the team appear in the content and are referenced with annotations.

Commencement Orders yet to be applied to the Human Rights Act 1998:

Commencement Orders bringing legislation that affects this Act into force:

- [S.I. 2009/1059](#) Order transitional provisions for effects of commencing SI 2009/812