



# Equality Act 2010

## 2010 CHAPTER 15

### PART 9

#### ENFORCEMENT

#### CHAPTER 4

#### EQUALITY OF TERMS

#### 127 Jurisdiction

- (1) An employment tribunal has, subject to subsection (6), jurisdiction to determine a complaint relating to a breach of an equality clause or rule.
- (2) The jurisdiction conferred by subsection (1) includes jurisdiction to determine a complaint arising out of a breach of an equality clause or rule; and a reference in this Chapter to a complaint relating to such a breach is to be read accordingly.
- (3) An employment tribunal also has jurisdiction to determine an application by a responsible person for a declaration as to the rights of that person and a worker in relation to a dispute about the effect of an equality clause or rule.
- (4) An employment tribunal also has jurisdiction to determine an application by the trustees or managers of an occupational pension scheme for a declaration as to their rights and those of a member in relation to a dispute about the effect of an equality rule.
- (5) An employment tribunal also has jurisdiction to determine a question that—
  - (a) relates to an equality clause or rule, and
  - (b) is referred to the tribunal by virtue of section 128(2).
- (6) This section does not apply to a complaint relating to an act done when the complainant was serving as a member of the armed forces unless—
  - (a) the complainant has made a service complaint about the matter, and
  - (b) the complaint has not been withdrawn.

*Changes to legislation: Equality Act 2010, Chapter 4 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 18 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

- (7) <sup>[F1]</sup>Subsections (2) to (6) ] of section 121 apply for the purposes of subsection (6) of this section as they apply for the purposes of subsection (1) of that section.
- (8) In proceedings before an employment tribunal on a complaint relating to a breach of an equality rule, the employer—
- (a) is to be treated as a party, and
  - (b) is accordingly entitled to appear and be heard.
- (9) Nothing in this section affects such jurisdiction as the High Court, <sup>[F2]</sup>the county court], the Court of Session or the sheriff has in relation to an equality clause or rule.

#### Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 127(7) substituted (1.1.2016) by [Armed Forces \(Service Complaints and Financial Assistance\) Act 2015 \(c. 19\)](#), s. 7(1), [Sch. para. 14](#); S.I. 2015/1957, reg. 2 (with savings and transitional provisions in S.I. 2015/1969)
- F2** Words in s. 127(9) substituted (22.4.2014) by [Crime and Courts Act 2013 \(c. 22\)](#), s. 61(3), [Sch. 9 para. 52](#); S.I. 2014/954, art. 2(c) (with art. 3) (with transitional provisions and savings in S.I. 2014/956, arts. 3-11)

#### Commencement Information

- I1** S. 127 wholly in force; s. 127 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 216; s. 127 in force at 1.10.2010 by S.I. 2010/2317, [art. 2\(1\)\(9\)\(f\)](#) (with [art. 15](#), and subject to transitional provision in [art. 7](#))

### 128 References by court to tribunal, etc.

- (1) If it appears to a court in which proceedings are pending that a claim or counter-claim relating to an equality clause or rule could more conveniently be determined by an employment tribunal, the court may strike out the claim or counter-claim.
- (2) If in proceedings before a court a question arises about an equality clause or rule, the court may (whether or not on an application by a party to the proceedings)—
- (a) refer the question, or direct that it be referred by a party to the proceedings, to an employment tribunal for determination, and
  - (b) stay or sist the proceedings in the meantime.

#### Commencement Information

- I2** S. 128 wholly in force; s. 128 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 216; s. 128 in force at 1.10.2010 by S.I. 2010/2317, [art. 2\(1\)\(9\)\(f\)](#) (with [art. 15](#), and subject to transitional provision in [art. 7](#))

### 129 Time limits

- (1) This section applies to—
- (a) a complaint relating to a breach of an equality clause or rule;
  - (b) an application for a declaration referred to in section 127(3) or (4).
- (2) Proceedings on the complaint or application may not be brought in an employment tribunal after the end of the qualifying period.

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- (3) If the complaint or application relates to terms of work other than terms of service in the armed forces, the qualifying period is, in a case mentioned in the first column of the table, the period mentioned in the second column [F3, subject to [F4[F5section] 140B]].

<i>Case</i>	<i>Qualifying period</i>
A standard case	The period of 6 months beginning with the last day of the employment or appointment.
A stable work case (but not if it is also a concealment or incapacity case (or both))	The period of 6 months beginning with the day on which the stable working relationship ended.
A concealment case (but not if it is also an incapacity case)	The period of 6 months beginning with the day on which the worker discovered (or could with reasonable diligence have discovered) the qualifying fact.
An incapacity case (but not if it is also a concealment case)	The period of 6 months beginning with the day on which the worker ceased to have the incapacity.
A case which is a concealment case and an incapacity case.	The period of 6 months beginning with the later of the days on which the period would begin if the case were merely a concealment or incapacity case.

- (4) If the complaint or application relates to terms of service in the armed forces, the qualifying period is, in a case mentioned in the first column of the table, the period mentioned in the second column[F6, subject to section 140B].

<i>Case</i>	<i>Qualifying period</i>
A standard case	The period of 9 months beginning with the last day of the period of service during which the complaint arose.
A concealment case (but not if it is also an incapacity case)	The period of 9 months beginning with the day on which the worker discovered (or could with reasonable diligence have discovered) the qualifying fact.
An incapacity case (but not if it is also a concealment case)	The period of 9 months beginning with the day on which the worker ceased to have the incapacity.
A case which is a concealment case and an incapacity case.	The period of 9 months beginning with the later of the days on which the period would begin if the case were merely a concealment or incapacity case.

#### Textual Amendments

- F3** Words in s. 129(3) inserted (20.5.2011 with application as mentioned in regs. 3, 4 of the amending S.I.) by The Cross-Border Mediation (EU Directive) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 2011/1133), **reg. 57**
- F4** Words in s. 129(3) substituted (6.4.2014) by Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (c. 24), s. 103(3), **Sch. 2 para. 44(a)**; S.I. 2014/253, art. 3(g)

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- F5** Word in s. 129(3) substituted (31.12.2020) by [The Cross-Border Mediation \(EU Directive\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/469\)](#), reg. 1(1), **Sch. 1 para. 17(4)** (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2020/1493, regs. 1(1), 4(5)(6)); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F6** Words in s. 129(4) inserted (6.4.2014) by [Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 \(c. 24\)](#), s. 103(3), **Sch. 2 para. 44(b)**; S.I. 2014/253, art. 3(g)

**Commencement Information**

- I3** S. 129 wholly in force; s. 129 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 216; s. 129 in force at 1.10.2010 by S.I. 2010/2317, **art. 2(1)(9)(f)** (with art. 15, and subject to transitional provision in art. 7)

**130 Section 129: supplementary**

- (1) This section applies for the purposes of section 129.
- (2) A standard case is a case which is not—
  - (a) a stable work case,
  - (b) a concealment case,
  - (c) an incapacity case, or
  - (d) a concealment case and an incapacity case.
- (3) A stable work case is a case where the proceedings relate to a period during which there was a stable working relationship between the worker and the responsible person (including any time after the terms of work had expired).
- (4) A concealment case in proceedings relating to an equality clause is a case where—
  - (a) the responsible person deliberately concealed a qualifying fact from the worker, and
  - (b) the worker did not discover (or could not with reasonable diligence have discovered) the qualifying fact until after the relevant day.
- (5) A concealment case in proceedings relating to an equality rule is a case where—
  - (a) the employer or the trustees or managers of the occupational pension scheme in question deliberately concealed a qualifying fact from the member, and
  - (b) the member did not discover (or could not with reasonable diligence have discovered) the qualifying fact until after the relevant day.
- (6) A qualifying fact for the purposes of subsection (4) or (5) is a fact—
  - (a) which is relevant to the complaint, and
  - (b) without knowledge of which the worker or member could not reasonably have been expected to bring the proceedings.
- (7) An incapacity case in proceedings relating to an equality clause with respect to terms of work other than terms of service in the armed forces is a case where the worker had an incapacity during the period of 6 months beginning with the later of—
  - (a) the relevant day, or
  - (b) the day on which the worker discovered (or could with reasonable diligence have discovered) the qualifying fact deliberately concealed from the worker by the responsible person.
- (8) An incapacity case in proceedings relating to an equality clause with respect to terms of service in the armed forces is a case where the worker had an incapacity during the period of 9 months beginning with the later of—

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- (a) the last day of the period of service during which the complaint arose, or
  - (b) the day on which the worker discovered (or could with reasonable diligence have discovered) the qualifying fact deliberately concealed from the worker by the responsible person.
- (9) An incapacity case in proceedings relating to an equality rule is a case where the member of the occupational pension scheme in question had an incapacity during the period of 6 months beginning with the later of—
- (a) the relevant day, or
  - (b) the day on which the member discovered (or could with reasonable diligence have discovered) the qualifying fact deliberately concealed from the member by the employer or the trustees or managers of the scheme.
- (10) The relevant day for the purposes of this section is—
- (a) the last day of the employment or appointment, or
  - (b) the day on which the stable working relationship between the worker and the responsible person ended.

#### Commencement Information

- I4** [S. 130](#) wholly in force; [s. 130](#) not in force at Royal Assent see [s. 216](#); [s. 130](#) in force at 1.10.2010 by [S.I. 2010/2317](#), [art. 2\(1\)\(9\)\(f\)](#) (with [art. 15](#), and subject to transitional provision in [art. 7](#))

### 131 Assessment of whether work is of equal value

- (1) This section applies to proceedings before an employment tribunal on—
- (a) a complaint relating to a breach of an equality clause or rule, or
  - (b) a question referred to the tribunal by virtue of section 128(2).
- (2) Where a question arises in the proceedings as to whether one person's work is of equal value to another's, the tribunal may, before determining the question, require a member of the panel of independent experts to prepare a report on the question.
- (3) The tribunal may withdraw a requirement that it makes under subsection (2); and, if it does so, it may—
- (a) request the panel member to provide it with specified documentation;
  - (b) make such other requests to that member as are connected with the withdrawal of the requirement.
- (4) If the tribunal requires the preparation of a report under subsection (2) (and does not withdraw the requirement), it must not determine the question unless it has received the report.
- (5) Subsection (6) applies where—
- (a) a question arises in the proceedings as to whether the work of one person (A) is of equal value to the work of another (B), and
  - (b) A's work and B's work have been given different values by a job evaluation study.
- (6) The tribunal must determine that A's work is not of equal value to B's work unless it has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the evaluation contained in the study—
- (a) was based on a system that discriminates because of sex, or

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- (b) is otherwise unreliable.
- (7) For the purposes of subsection (6)(a), a system discriminates because of sex if a difference (or coincidence) between values that the system sets on different demands is not justifiable regardless of the sex of the person on whom the demands are made.
- (8) A reference to a member of the panel of independent experts is a reference to a person—
- (a) who is for the time being designated as such by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) for the purposes of this section, and
  - (b) who is neither a member of the Council of ACAS nor one of its officers or members of staff.
- (9) “Job evaluation study” has the meaning given in section 80(5).

#### Commencement Information

**I5** S. 131 wholly in force; s. 131 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 216; s. 131 in force at 1.10.2010 by S.I. 2010/2317, art. 2(1)(9)(f) (with art. 15, and subject to transitional provision in art. 7)

### 132 Remedies in non-pensions cases

- (1) This section applies to proceedings before a court or employment tribunal on a complaint relating to a breach of an equality clause, other than a breach with respect to membership of or rights under an occupational pension scheme.
- (2) If the court or tribunal finds that there has been a breach of the equality clause, it may—
  - (a) make a declaration as to the rights of the parties in relation to the matters to which the proceedings relate;
  - (b) order an award by way of arrears of pay or damages in relation to the complainant.
- (3) The court or tribunal may not order a payment under subsection (2)(b) in respect of a time before the arrears day.
- (4) In relation to proceedings in England and Wales, the arrears day is, in a case mentioned in the first column of the table, the day mentioned in the second column.

<i>Case</i>	<i>Arrears day</i>
A standard case	The day falling 6 years before the day on which the proceedings were instituted.
A concealment case or an incapacity case (or a case which is both).	The day on which the breach first occurred.

- (5) In relation to proceedings in Scotland, the arrears day is the first day of—
  - (a) the period of 5 years ending with the day on which the proceedings were commenced, or
  - (b) if the case involves a relevant incapacity, or a relevant fraud or error, [F7]the period determined in accordance with section 135(6) and (7)].

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#### Textual Amendments

- F7** Words in s. 132(5)(b) substituted (1.10.2010) by [The Equality Act 2010 \(Consequential Amendments, Saving and Supplementary Provisions\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/2279\)](#), arts. 1(2), [6](#)

#### Commencement Information

- I6** S. 132 wholly in force; s. 132 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 216; s. 132 in force at 1.10.2010 by S.I. 2010/2317, [art. 2\(1\)\(9\)\(f\)](#) (with [art. 15](#), and subject to transitional provision in [art. 7](#))

### 133 Remedies in pensions cases

- (1) This section applies to proceedings before a court or employment tribunal on a complaint relating to—
- (a) a breach of an equality rule, or
  - (b) a breach of an equality clause with respect to membership of, or rights under, an occupational pension scheme.
- (2) If the court or tribunal finds that there has been a breach as referred to in subsection (1) —
- (a) it may make a declaration as to the rights of the parties in relation to the matters to which the proceedings relate;
  - (b) it must not order arrears of benefits or damages or any other amount to be paid to the complainant.
- (3) Subsection (2)(b) does not apply if the proceedings are proceedings to which section 134 applies.
- (4) If the breach relates to a term on which persons become members of the scheme, the court or tribunal may declare that the complainant is entitled to be admitted to the scheme with effect from a specified date.
- (5) A date specified for the purposes of subsection (4) must not be before 8 April 1976.
- (6) If the breach relates to a term on which members of the scheme are treated, the court or tribunal may declare that the complainant is, in respect of a specified period, entitled to secure the rights that would have accrued if the breach had not occurred.
- (7) A period specified for the purposes of subsection (6) must not begin before 17 May 1990.
- (8) If the court or tribunal makes a declaration under subsection (6), the employer must provide such resources to the scheme as are necessary to secure for the complainant (without contribution or further contribution by the complainant or other members) the rights referred to in that subsection.

#### Commencement Information

- I7** S. 133 wholly in force; s. 133 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 216; s. 133 in force at 1.10.2010 by S.I. 2010/2317, [art. 2\(1\)\(9\)\(f\)](#) (with [art. 15](#), and subject to transitional provision in [art. 7](#))



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### 134 Remedies in claims for arrears brought by pensioner members

- (1) This section applies to proceedings before a court or employment tribunal on a complaint by a pensioner member of an occupational pension scheme relating to a breach of an equality clause or rule with respect to a term on which the member is treated.
- (2) If the court or tribunal finds that there has been a breach referred to in subsection (1), it may—
  - (a) make a declaration as to the rights of the complainant and the respondent in relation to the matters to which the proceedings relate;
  - (b) order an award by way of arrears of benefits or damages or of any other amount in relation to the complainant.
- (3) The court or tribunal must not order an award under subsection (2)(b) in respect of a time before the arrears day.
- (4) If the court or tribunal orders an award under subsection (2)(b), the employer must provide such resources to the scheme as are necessary to secure for the complainant (without contribution or further contribution by the complainant or other members) the amount of the award.
- (5) In relation to proceedings in England and Wales, the arrears day is, in a case mentioned in the first column of the table, the day mentioned in the second column.

<i>Case</i>	<i>Arrears day</i>
A standard case	The day falling 6 years before the day on which the proceedings were commenced.
A concealment case or an incapacity case (or a case which is both).	The day on which the breach first occurred.

- (6) In relation to proceedings in Scotland, the arrears day is the first day of—
  - (a) the period of 5 years ending with the day on which the proceedings were commenced, or
  - (b) if the case involves a relevant incapacity, or a relevant fraud or error, [<sup>F8</sup>the period determined in accordance with section 135(6) and (7)].

#### Textual Amendments

**F8** Words in s. 134(6)(b) substituted (1.10.2010) by [The Equality Act 2010 \(Consequential Amendments, Saving and Supplementary Provisions\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/2279\)](#), arts. 1(2), 6

#### Commencement Information

**I8** S. 134 wholly in force; s. 134 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 216; s. 134 in force at 1.10.2010 by S.I. 2010/2317, art. 2(1)(9)(f) (with art. 15, and subject to transitional provision in art. 7)

### 135 Supplementary

- (1) This section applies for the purposes of sections 132 to 134.
- (2) A standard case is a case which is not—



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- (a) a concealment case,
  - (b) an incapacity case, or
  - (c) a concealment case and an incapacity case.
- (3) A concealment case in relation to an equality clause is a case where—
- (a) the responsible person deliberately concealed a qualifying fact (as defined by section 130) from the worker, and
  - (b) the worker commenced the proceedings before the end of the period of 6 years beginning with the day on which the worker discovered (or could with reasonable diligence have discovered) the qualifying fact.
- (4) A concealment case in relation to an equality rule is a case where—
- (a) the employer or the trustees or managers of the occupational pension scheme in question deliberately concealed a qualifying fact (as defined by section 130) from the member, and
  - (b) the member commenced the proceedings before the end of the period of 6 years beginning with the day on which the member discovered (or could with reasonable diligence have discovered) the qualifying fact.
- (5) An incapacity case is a case where the worker or member—
- (a) had an incapacity when the breach first occurred, and
  - (b) commenced the proceedings before the end of the period of 6 years beginning with the day on which the worker or member ceased to have the incapacity.
- (6) A case involves a relevant incapacity or a relevant fraud or error if the period of 5 years referred to in section 132(5)(a) [F9 or 134(6)(a)] is, as a result of subsection (7) below, reckoned as a period of more than [F10 5 years; and—
- (a) if, as a result of subsection (7), that period is reckoned as a period of more than 5 years but no more than 20 years, the period for the purposes of section 132(5)(b) or (as the case may be) section 134(6)(b) is that extended period;
  - (b) if, as a result of subsection (7), that period is reckoned as a period of more than 20 years, the period for the purposes of section 132(5)(b) or (as the case may be) section 134(6)(b) is a period of 20 years.]
- (7) For the purposes of the reckoning referred to in subsection (6), no account is to be taken of time when the worker or member—
- (a) had an incapacity, or
  - (b) was induced by a relevant fraud or error to refrain from commencing proceedings (not being a time after the worker or member could with reasonable diligence have discovered the fraud or error).
- (8) For the purposes of subsection (7)—
- (a) a fraud is relevant in relation to an equality clause if it is a fraud on the part of the responsible person;
  - (b) an error is relevant in relation to an equality clause if it is induced by the words or conduct of the responsible person;
  - (c) a fraud is relevant in relation to an equality rule if it is a fraud on the part of the employer or the trustees or managers of the scheme;
  - (d) an error is relevant in relation to an equality rule if it is induced by the words or conduct of the employer or the trustees or managers of the scheme.

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- (9) A reference in subsection (8) to the responsible person, the employer or the trustees or managers includes a reference to a person acting on behalf of the person or persons concerned.
- (10) In relation to terms of service, a reference in section 132(5) or subsection (3) or (5) (b) of this section to commencing proceedings is to be read as a reference to making a service complaint.
- (11) A reference to a pensioner member of a scheme includes a reference to a person who is entitled to the present payment of pension or other benefits derived through a member.
- (12) In relation to proceedings before a court—
- (a) a reference to a complaint is to be read as a reference to a claim, and
  - (b) a reference to a complainant is to be read as a reference to a claimant.

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#### Textual Amendments

- F9** Words in s. 135(6) inserted (1.10.2010) by [The Equality Act 2010 \(Consequential Amendments, Saving and Supplementary Provisions\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/2279\)](#), arts. 1(2), **7(a)**
- F10** Words in s. 135(6) substituted (1.10.2010) by [The Equality Act 2010 \(Consequential Amendments, Saving and Supplementary Provisions\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/2279\)](#), arts. 1(2), **7(b)**
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#### Commencement Information

- I9** S. 135 wholly in force; s. 135 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 216; s. 135 in force at 1.10.2010 by [S.I. 2010/2317](#), **art. 2(1)(9)(f)** (with [art. 15](#), and subject to transitional provision in [art. 7](#))

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**Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:**

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 40A inserted by [2023 c. 51 s. 1](#)
- s. 120(9) inserted by [2023 c. 51 s. 2\(b\)](#)
- s. 124A inserted by [2023 c. 51 s. 3](#)