

Caste Discrimination law in the UK timetable

After decades of raising awareness of Caste-based discrimination and the need for legal protection for victims in the UK by many organisations, in 2010, Parliament agreed a power in Section 9(5)a of the Equality Act 2010 that could be used by a Minister to add Caste to the list of 'protected characteristics'. This would make it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of Caste in employment, education and the provision of services in the UK.

The then Government decided that further research was needed to support the use of the power in Section 9(5)a, and commissioned the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) to undertake it. NIESR published its report [*Caste discrimination and harassment in Great Britain*](#) in 2010 and found strong evidence of Caste-based discrimination in the areas covered by the Equality Act. NIESR's research confirmed the findings of research conducted by the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance in its report [*Hidden Apartheid – Voice of the Community - Caste and Caste Discrimination in the UK*](#) (October 2009).

The Government failed to make a statement on the recommendations made by NIESR in its report that called for legal protection for victims for over two years. On 1 March 2013 Helen Grant, Minister for Equalities in her statement said an educational approach and more research was required. The Statement was in response to an amendment clause on Caste discrimination tabled by the Lords to the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill 2012 and two of these amendments came to a vote and the Government lost both votes.

On 23 April 2013 the Government introduced a slightly re-worked amendment on Caste discrimination and this was agreed by Parliament on the same day. The Bill received Royal Assent on 25 April 2013 and the provision (Section 97) in the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 that provides that the Government must legislate to outlaw Caste discrimination came into force on 25 June 2013.

After months of waiting, on 29 July, the Government announced the [*Caste discrimination legislation timetable*](#). The protracted timetable that included no less than two sets of 12-week formal consultations and report by the EHRC, ensured that the legislation would not be introduced until after the next election. The first of the two 12-week consultations was due to begin in February/March 2014. On 6 May 2014 the Government in response to Parliamentary Question by Lord Eric Avebury, announced that this would be delayed until Autumn 2014. We believe the Government is being disingenuous in its reasons for the delay. A Joint Statement, June, 10, 2014 was submitted to Government.

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