**The Human Rights Act**

The Human Rights Act 1998 (also known as the Act or the HRA) came into force in the United Kingdom in October 2000. It is composed of a series of sections that have the effect of codifying the protections in the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law.

All public bodies (such as courts, police, local governments, hospitals, publicly funded schools, and others) and other bodies carrying out public functions have to comply with the Convention rights.

This means, among other things, that individuals can take human rights cases in domestic courts; they no longer have to go to Strasbourg to argue their case in the European Court of Human Rights.

The Act sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that individuals in the UK have access to. They include:

* [Right to life](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/right-to-life/)
* [Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/protection-from-torture-and-mistreatment/)
* [Right to liberty and security](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/right-to-liberty-and-security/)
* [Freedom from slavery and forced labour](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/protection-from-slavery-and-forced-labour/)
* [Right to a fair trial](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/right-to-a-fair-trial/)
* [No punishment without law](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/no-punishment-without-law/)
* [Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/respect-for-your-private-and-family-life/)
* [Freedom of thought, belief and religion](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/freedom-of-thought-belief-and-religion/)
* [Freedom of expression](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/freedom-of-expression/)
* [Freedom of assembly and association](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/freedom-of-assembly-and-association/)
* [Right to marry and start a family](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/right-to-marry/)
* [Protection from discrimination in respect of these these rights and freedoms](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/protection-from-discrimination/)
* [Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/protection-of-property/)
* [Right to education](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/right-to-education/)
* [Right to participate in free elections](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/right-to-free-elections/)

## Being Safe and Protected from Harm

#### Freedom and safety are important to us all.

You should be free from harm, and also from the threat of harm – physical or psychological. This includes living in fear of strangers or neighbours. But, just as importantly, it includes living in fear of family members.

The government should not take away your freedom without good reason. Of course, there are times when a person may need to be kept in hospital against their will or imprisoned for committing a crime. But the ability to move around freely is one of the most important freedoms in our society.

If you are under threat from someone, the government has a duty to protect you.

UK law includes a range of human rights to help keep you safe from harm.

#### Which human rights are relevant?

* [The right to life](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/right-to-life/)
* [Protection from torture and inhuman and degrading treatment](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/protection-from-torture-and-mistreatment/)
* [Protection from slavery and forced labour](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/protection-from-slavery-and-forced-labour/)
* [Right to liberty and security](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/right-to-liberty-and-security/)
* [Right to respect for private and family life](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/respect-for-your-private-and-family-life/)
* [Protection from discrimination](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/protection-from-discrimination/)