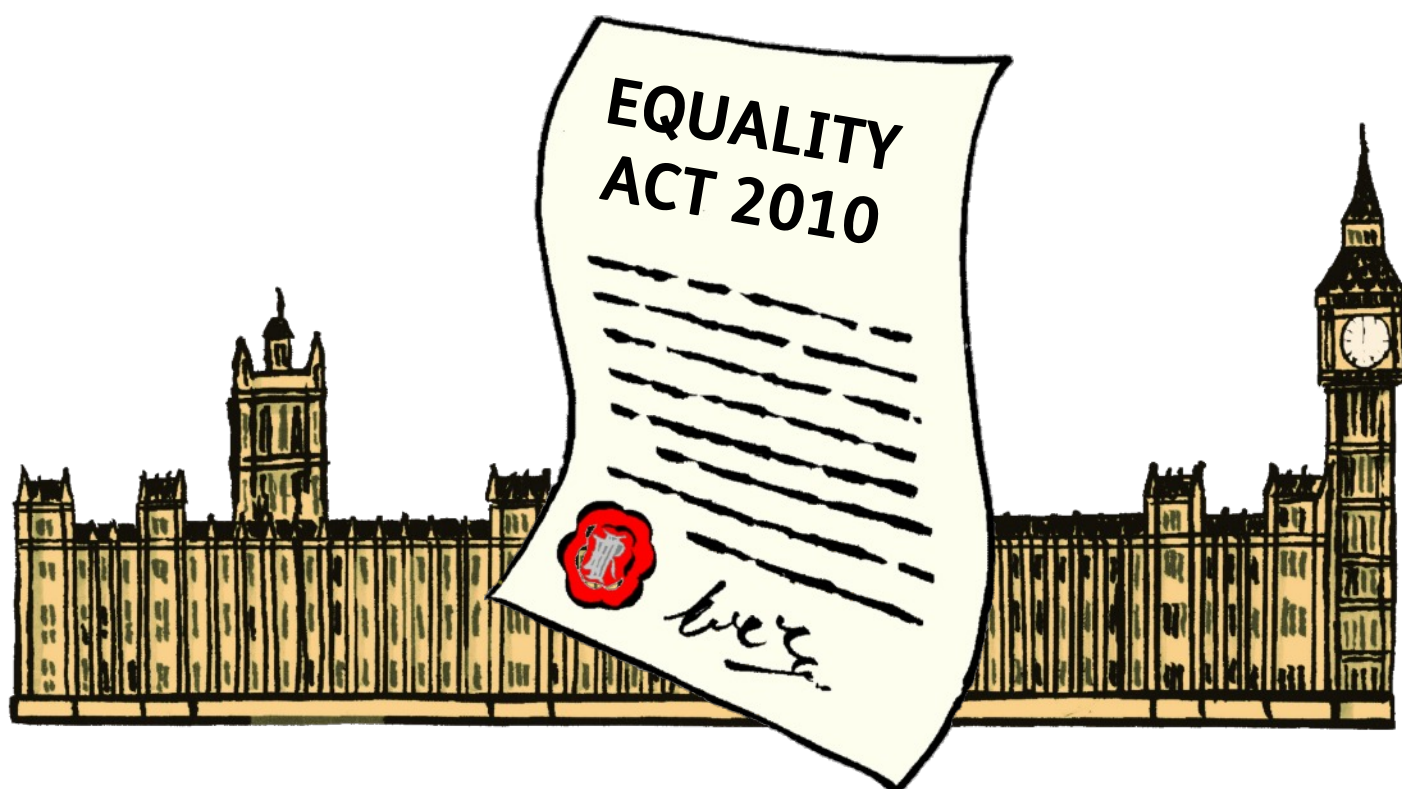




HOUSE OF LORDS

Equality Act committee



The Equality Act 2010

The effect on disabled people



EasyRead version of:
The Equality Act 2010: the impact on disabled people

**House of Lords Select Committee
on the Equality Act 2010 and Disability
Report of Session 2015–16**

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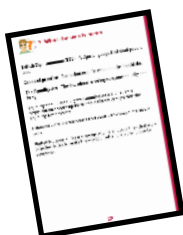
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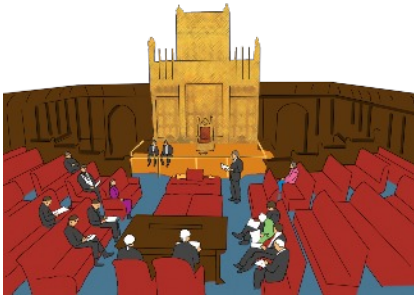
Some difficult words are in **bold**.
There is a list at the end of this report
to explain what they mean.

1. About this report



Who wrote this report?

The House of Lords Select Committee on the **Equality Act** 2010 and Disability wrote this report.



The House of Lords is part of Parliament and a select committee is a group that find out about something.

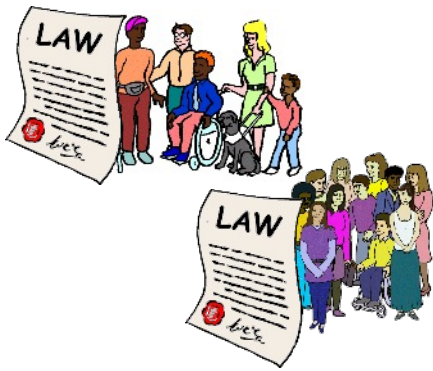


We found out if a law called the **Equality Act** makes things fairer for everyone.



What is the Equality Act?

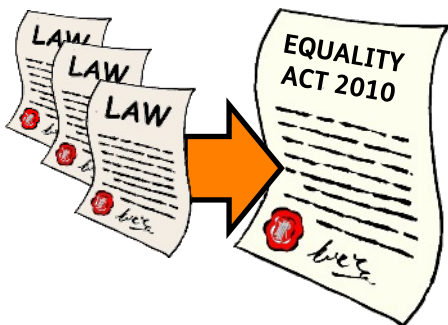
The **Equality Act** is the law about treating everyone equally and fairly.



There used to be different laws for different groups.



The **Disability Discrimination Act** said employers, shops and services must not treat disabled people worse than other people. It also said that employers, shops and people who run services, might need to do things differently if disabled people need them to.



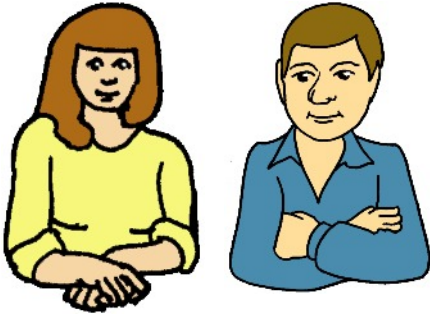
In 2010 the government brought all these laws together into the **Equality Act**. This law is about different reasons people are treated unfairly, including:



- disability



- race



- sex



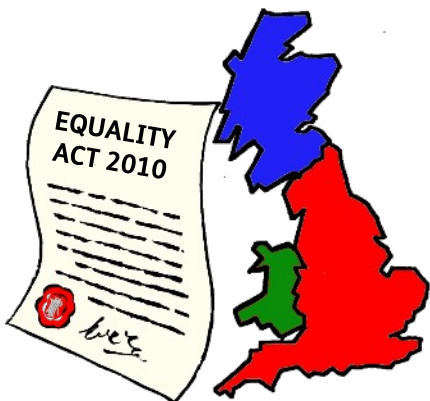
- religion



- age.



Now the **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)** speaks up for all these different groups.

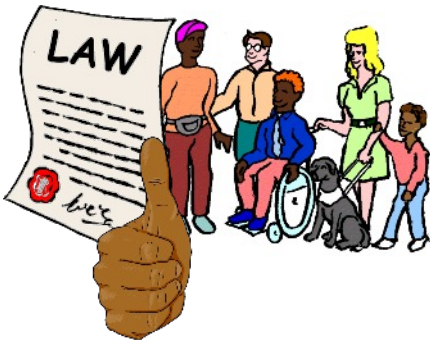


The **Equality Act** protects people in England, Wales and Scotland. Northern Ireland has a different law that protects disabled people.

What is this report about?



This report is about if the **Equality Act** has made things more equal and fair for disabled people.



Most people said it was better when there was a law just for disabled people.



We thought that it was important to make sure the **Equality Act** works for everyone.



This report looks at how the government, employers and services can make things better for disabled people.



2. Why things need to change



There are over 11 million disabled people in the United Kingdom. There will be more disabled people in the future.



Some people are born with a disability. Other people become disabled following an accident, illness or getting older.



They all have the same right as everyone else to get involved and do the things they want to.

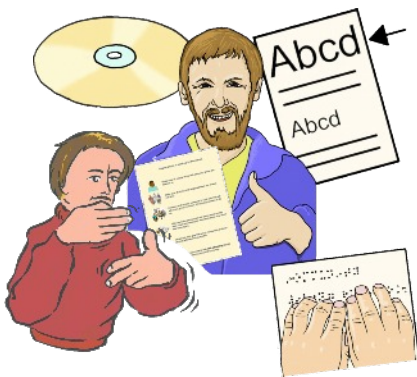


But sometimes they are not treated fairly because the government, employers or services do not do things they should.

3. What we looked at



We asked disabled people if the **Equality Act** helps them get treated fairly.



We sent out information. We also asked people in **British Sign Language** and EasyRead.



144 people and organisations wrote to us. We asked some of them to come and talk to us.

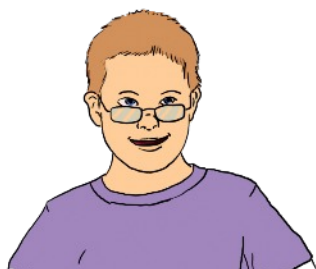


This included people with:

- physical disabilities



- mental health problems



- learning difficulties



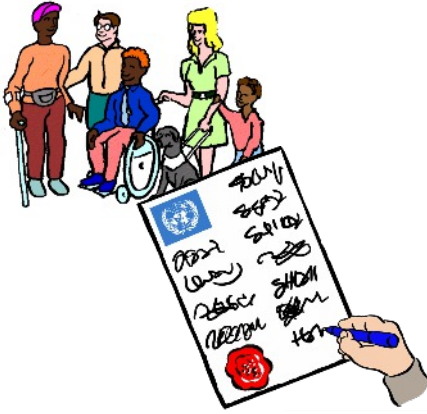
- sight problems



- deaf people told us what they thought using sign language interpreters.



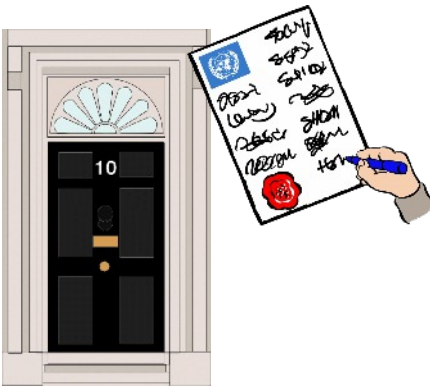
We also visited an organisation in London run by disabled people.



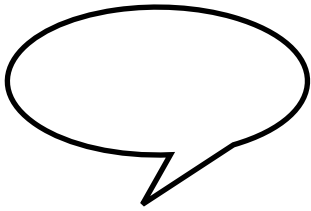
We also thought about the **United Nations** agreement on the rights of people with disabilities.



The **United Nations** is a group of different countries that work together to try to make the world a better and safer place for everyone.



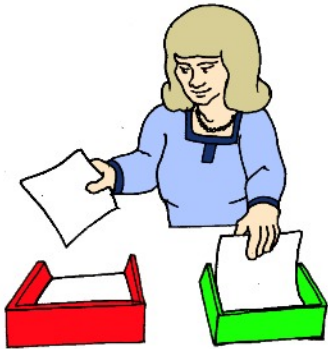
Governments like the UK that sign the agreement must work to stop disabled people being treated unfairly.



4. What people said



Most people said The **Equality Act** makes things harder for disabled people.



The government tried to cut down on paperwork but this made it difficult for some people to get their rights.

 Equality and Human Rights Commission



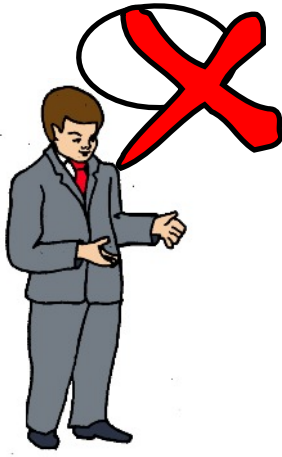
Making sure the law works

The **Equality and Human Right Commission (EHRC)** checks how the law is working.

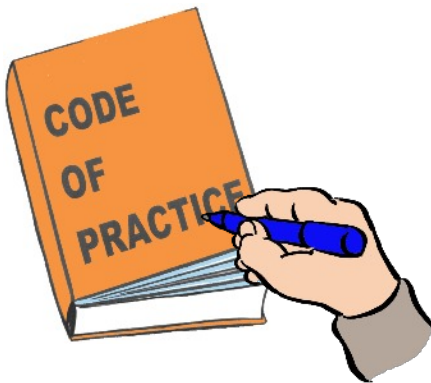
 Equality and Human Rights Commission



A lot of people think the **EHRC** has too much to do.



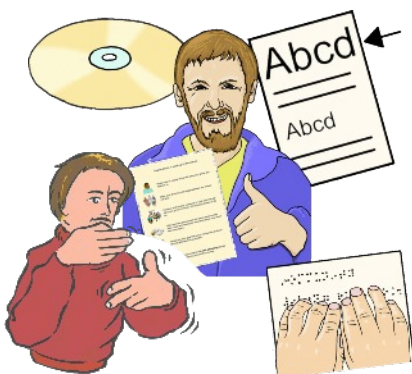
It does not use its powers to speak up for disabled people as much as it could. It doesn't talk to disabled people often enough.



The **EHRC** can write **codes of practice**. These are rules that say what people should do.



The **EHRC** has waited a long time for the government to agree **codes of practice** that would make the law clearer for disabled people.



Communication – talking and listening to disabled people

People said the government should use more EasyRead information, **British Sign Language (BSL)** and information for blind people.



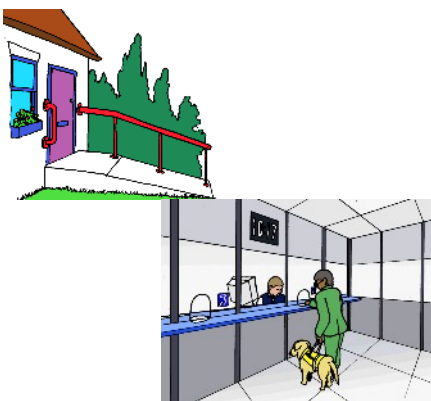
It is difficult for disabled people to use some websites to apply for jobs or get things cheaper by shopping online.



Deaf people said **BSL** is an important language and more people should learn it.



There are guides about information but lots of services do not use them. Everyone should understand the **Equality Act** better.



Changes to help disabled people

The law says employers, buildings and services must make changes to help disabled people do things other people can.

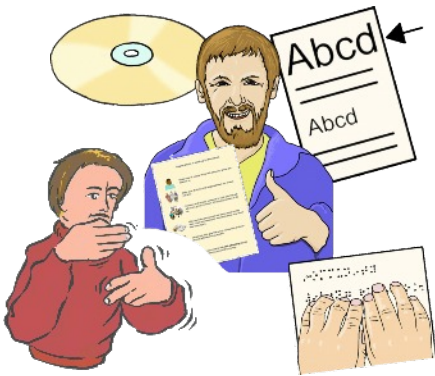


This could be:

- putting in ramps so people can get into a building



- changing the way a service is run so disabled people can use it



- making sure there is EasyRead information or someone who can use **BSL**.



But often services do not understand the law or the types of changes they can make.



People said it is unfair that they have to go to court to change things.



Carers

Carers can be treated unfairly because they look after someone who is disabled.



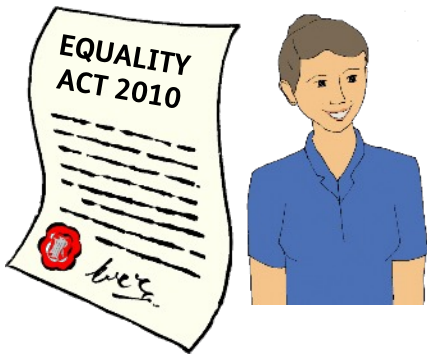
Many carers are also disabled themselves.



The law says employers should think about changing the hours carers work to make it easier for them. But some employers would not do this and carers had to leave their job.



Other people said they were shouted at or bullied because they care for someone who is disabled.



Many carers do not know that the **Equality Act** is for them too. They think it is just for disabled people.



Transport

Transport is one of the biggest problems for disabled people.



People still find it difficult to travel when and where they want. This stops them being independent, working, going to school or college or doing other things.



Most disabled people did not think the **Equality Act** made transport better for them.



They said no one checks what is happening or uses the law to change things. For example, to make sure taxi drivers take people with wheelchairs or guide dogs, and do not make them pay more.



London is better than most other parts of the UK. Most big towns and cities are better than the country.

Public services



The law says public services must think about whether plans or changes will treat everyone fairly.



They must make sure they:

- do not treat anyone worse than other people



- give everyone the same chance to use their services



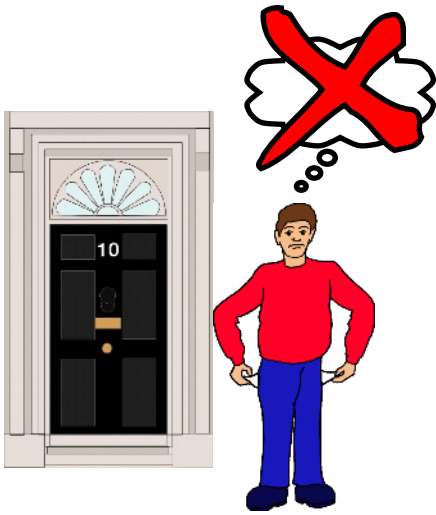
- help people who are protected by the law to get on with other people.



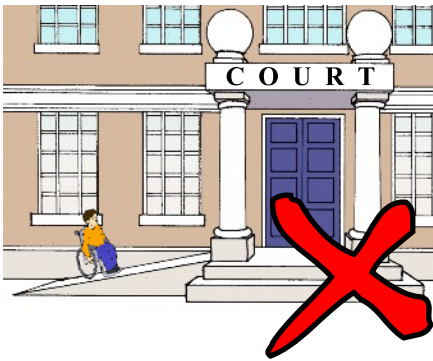
Many people told us the law is not clear and it is easy for public services to get round it.



But when public services use the law properly it can help them make fairer decisions and run better services.



Many disabled people said the government did not think about how cutting services to save money would affect them.



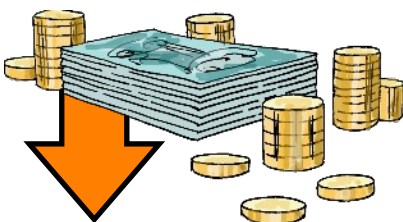
Using the courts

Most disabled people want to sort things out quickly and easily. They do not want to go to court to prove they were treated unfairly.



It can be difficult to go to court because:

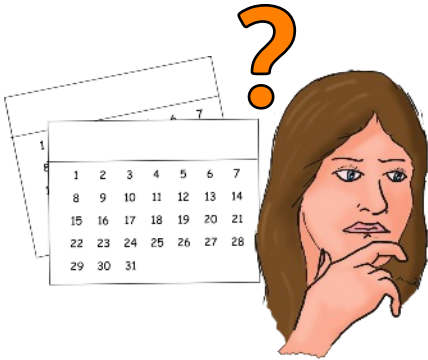
- you have to pay a fee



- you get less money and support



- it costs a lot of money if you lose



- it is complicated and takes a long time.



Tribunals are special courts that deal with complaints about work. They used to be free, but now you have to pay for them. Disabled people said this stopped them using them.



Some changes that cut down on paperwork make it more difficult for disabled people to go to **tribunals**.



Only the courts can tell people to change the services they provide. But people said **tribunals** should also be able to tell employers to change things.



Other ways to make sure people stick to the law

There are other ways to make sure services treat disabled people fairly.

Equality and
Human Rights
Commission



The **EHRC** used to bring people together to try to sort things out. They cannot do this now.

acaras

An organisation called ACAS can help you complain if you think you are treated unfairly at work.



Local councils give people permission to build, drive taxis or run clubs and pubs. They should be able to stop them doing this if they treat disabled people unfairly.

Children with disabilities



Many children with disabilities do worse in school than other children.



It is also harder for them to go to university or college or get a job when they leave school.

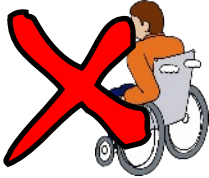


They are more likely to be bullied or told to stay home from school.



Getting involved in public life

Disabled people have the right to be involved in public life. This includes the right to be elected (voted for) to speak for other people.



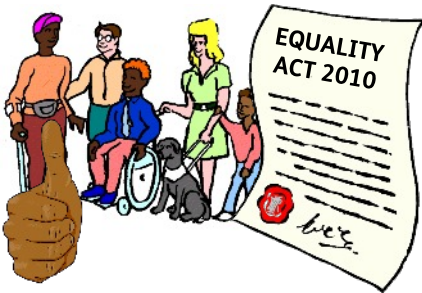
There are not enough disabled people in local government or in Parliament.



5. What we think needs to change



We think the government should:



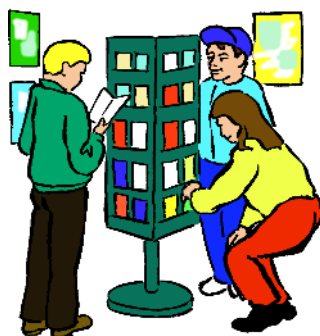
- make sure the **Equality Act** works better for disabled people



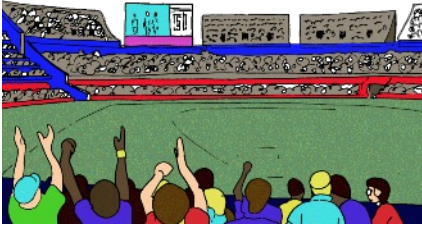
- think about how it will affect disabled people before they make plans or changes



- agree to the **codes of practice** to help the **EHRC** make the law work



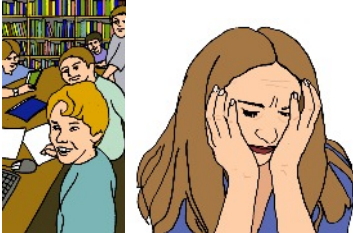
- look at the way it gives information and think about what disabled people need



- find out what is happening about making football grounds easy for disabled people to use



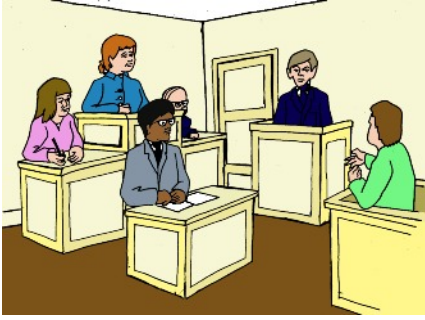
- change the law about public services so they have to involve disabled people when they make plans or changes



- find out how cuts to services affect disabled people



- look at things that make it more difficult for disabled people to use **tribunals** or the courts



- think about whether charities can go to court to complain about something that will be unfair for lots of disabled people.



We think the **EHRC** should:



- work with disabled people and their organisations to write a plan about how to use its powers



- bring people together to try to sort things out



- set up the Disability Committee again. This is a group that can make decisions about disability and the law



- run the advice and support service



- work with organisations of disabled people to tell people about rights and the **Equality Act**



- write a **code of practice** about making changes to help disabled people use services



- work with disabled people to write a guide about making changes



- work with carers to write a guide about their rights and the **Equality Act**.



We think the government and the **EHRC** should ask employers to think about how to help carers work hours that fit round the things they do as a carer.



We think local councils should have more powers to make sure taxis, buildings, pubs and clubs treat disabled people fairly.



We think schools should:

- understand and keep to the **Equality Act**
- look at changes to support children to behave in school before they tell them to stay at home.





- organisations that check schools and colleges should look at plans for supporting children who are disabled.



We think travel companies should spend more money on:

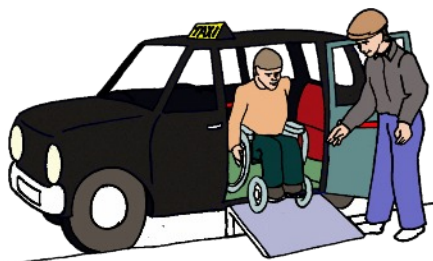
- training staff about disability



- making it easier for people in wheelchairs to use their services



- giving information to people who are blind or deaf



- making sure disabled people can use taxis.

6. How to find out more



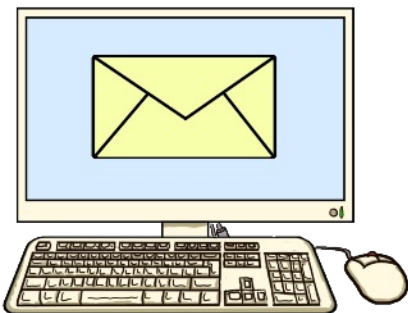
Write to:

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Disability, Committee Office
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London SW1A 0PW.**



Telephone:

020 7219 4384



Email:

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You can find out more about the House of
Lords and its committees on our website:
www.parliament.uk/equality-act-committee



7. What the words mean

British Sign Language (BSL) - A sign language that deaf people use.

Codes of practice - Rules that explain what people should do.

The **Disability Discrimination Act** - The law about treating disabled people equally and fairly.

The **Equality Act** - The law about treating everyone equally and fairly.

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) - This organisation speaks up for all the different groups that the **Equality Act** protects.

Tribunals - are special courts that deal with complaints about work.

United Nations - This is a group of different countries that work together to try to make the world a better and safer place for everyone.



This paper has been designed and produced for the House of Lords Select Committee on the Equality Act 2010 and Disability by the EasyRead service at Inspired Services Publishing Ltd. Ref ISL 114/15. March 2016.



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