

Preventing discrimination

All employers should take steps to try to make sure marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not happen at work.

As an employer, you should aim for a culture where:

- everyone knows that marriage and civil partnership discrimination is not acceptable
- people feel safe
- you recognise and promote the benefits of a diverse and inclusive organisation

[Find out more about improving equality, diversity and inclusion](#)

Steps for preventing discrimination

Many ways to prevent discrimination apply equally to all 'protected characteristics'. You can find out more in our advice on [preventing discrimination](#).

Measures you should take include:

- being aware of unconscious bias and stereotypes
- checking your policies
- recognising the impact of discrimination on mental health and wellbeing

If you're a small organisation with limited resources, there's still a lot you can do to prevent discrimination. Making your organisation more inclusive does not have to be costly or complicated.

If you're a public sector employer, you also have legal responsibilities under the [public sector equality duty](#).

Being aware of unconscious bias and stereotypes

Discrimination is not always intended. It can happen when decisions or behaviour are based on assumptions. It's important to be aware of:

- [unconscious bias](#) – when someone's thoughts or decisions are influenced by beliefs or assumptions they might not be aware of
- stereotyping – having a fixed view of what someone's like or what they can do because of being married or in a civil partnership

Checking your policies

You should check all relevant policies to make sure they do not discriminate. For example policies around:

- work-related rules or benefits for couples
- maternity, paternity and adoption leave

Any policy on relationships must not unfavourably affect married people or someone in a civil partnership.

For example, a security company has a policy that employees in a relationship must not work together. To prevent discrimination they must apply this rule to all relationships, not just to marriage or civil partnerships.

Supporting mental health and wellbeing

Marriage and civil partnership discrimination can affect someone's mental health and wellbeing.

It can lead to someone feeling threatened and unsafe at work. It can also have an impact on their attendance and work performance.

As an employer, you have a 'duty of care'. You must do all you reasonably can to support the health, safety and wellbeing of employees.

You do not have to be a mental health expert. But there are resources and support you can offer.

[Find out more about supporting mental health at work](#)

Get more advice and support

If you need help to deal with any challenges in your organisation, you can:

- [contact the Acas helpline](#)
- [get tailored support for your organisation](#)