
Changes to legislation: Equality Act 2010, Cross Heading: Organisations relating to religion or belief is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 19 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

SCHEDULES

SCHEDULE 23

GENERAL EXCEPTIONS

Organisations relating to religion or belief

- 2 (1) This paragraph applies to an organisation the purpose of which is—
- (a) to practise a religion or belief,
 - (b) to advance a religion or belief,
 - (c) to teach the practice or principles of a religion or belief,
 - (d) to enable persons of a religion or belief to receive any benefit, or to engage in any activity, within the framework of that religion or belief, or
 - (e) to foster or maintain good relations between persons of different religions or beliefs.
- (2) This paragraph does not apply to an organisation whose sole or main purpose is commercial.
- (3) The organisation does not contravene Part 3, 4 or 7, so far as relating to religion or belief or sexual orientation, only by restricting—
- (a) membership of the organisation;
 - (b) participation in activities undertaken by the organisation or on its behalf or under its auspices;
 - (c) the provision of goods, facilities or services in the course of activities undertaken by the organisation or on its behalf or under its auspices;
 - (d) the use or disposal of premises owned or controlled by the organisation.
- (4) A person does not contravene Part 3, 4 or 7, so far as relating to religion or belief or sexual orientation, only by doing anything mentioned in sub-paragraph (3) on behalf of or under the auspices of the organisation.
- (5) A minister does not contravene Part 3, 4 or 7, so far as relating to religion or belief or sexual orientation, only by restricting—
- (a) participation in activities carried on in the performance of the minister's functions in connection with or in respect of the organisation;
 - (b) the provision of goods, facilities or services in the course of activities carried on in the performance of the minister's functions in connection with or in respect of the organisation.
- (6) Sub-paragraphs (3) to (5) permit a restriction relating to religion or belief only if it is imposed—
- (a) because of the purpose of the organisation, or
 - (b) to avoid causing offence, on grounds of the religion or belief to which the organisation relates, to persons of that religion or belief.

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- (7) Sub-paragraphs (3) to (5) permit a restriction relating to sexual orientation only if it is imposed—
- (a) because it is necessary to comply with the doctrine of the organisation, or
 - (b) to avoid conflict with strongly held convictions within sub-paragraph (9).
- (8) In sub-paragraph (5), the reference to a minister is a reference to a minister of religion, or other person, who—
- (a) performs functions in connection with a religion or belief to which the organisation relates, and
 - (b) holds an office or appointment in, or is accredited, approved or recognised for the purposes of the organisation.
- (9) The strongly held convictions are—
- (a) in the case of a religion, the strongly held religious convictions of a significant number of the religion's followers;
 - (b) in the case of a belief, the strongly held convictions relating to the belief of a significant number of the belief's followers.
- [^{F1}(9A) An organisation does not contravene Part 3, 4 or 7 only by refusing to allow premises owned or controlled by the organisation to be used—
- (a) to solemnise a relevant Scottish marriage for the reason that the marriage is the marriage of two persons of the same sex;
 - [to solemnise a relevant Scottish marriage for the reason that the marriage is a marriage of two persons of the opposite sex who are in a civil partnership with each other;]
 - (b) to register a relevant Scottish civil partnership for the reason that the civil partnership is between two persons of the same sex [^{F3}or that it is between two persons of the opposite sex].
- (9B) A person (or a group of persons) does not contravene Part 3, 4 or 7 only by refusing to allow premises owned or controlled by the person (or the group) on behalf of an organisation to be used—
- (a) to solemnise a relevant Scottish marriage for the reason that the marriage is the marriage of two persons of the same sex;
 - [to solemnise a relevant Scottish marriage for the reason that the marriage is a marriage of two persons of the opposite sex who are in a civil partnership with each other;]
 - (b) to register a relevant Scottish civil partnership for the reason that the civil partnership is between two persons of the same sex [^{F5}or that it is between two persons of the opposite sex].
- (9C) An organisation does not contravene section 29 only by allowing an approved celebrant of the organisation to act as set out in sub-paragraph (1)[^{F6}, (1A)] or (2) of paragraph 25B of Schedule 3.
- (9D) In sub-paragraphs (9A) to (9C), “approved celebrant”, “relevant Scottish marriage” and “relevant Scottish civil partnership” have the same meaning as in paragraph 25B of Schedule 3.]
- (10) This paragraph does not permit anything which is prohibited by section 29, so far as relating to sexual orientation, if it is done—
- (a) on behalf of a public authority, and

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- (b) under the terms of a contract between the organisation and the public authority.
- (11) In the application of this paragraph in relation to sexual orientation, sub-paragraph (1)(e) must be ignored.
- (12) In the application of this paragraph in relation to sexual orientation, in sub-paragraph (3)(d), “disposal” does not include disposal of an interest in premises by way of sale if the interest being disposed of is—
 - (a) the entirety of the organisation's interest in the premises, or
 - (b) the entirety of the interest in respect of which the organisation has power of disposal.
- (13) In this paragraph—
 - (a) “disposal” is to be construed in accordance with section 38;
 - (b) “public authority” has the meaning given in section 150(1).

Textual Amendments

- F1** Sch. 23 para. 2(9A)-(9D) inserted (16.12.2014) by The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 and Civil Partnership Act 2004 (Consequential Provisions and Modifications) Order 2014 (S.I. 2014/3229), art. 1(2), **Sch. 5 para. 19(6)**
- F2** Sch. 23 para. 2(9A)(aa) inserted (27.1.2022) by The Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2020 and Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 (Consequential Modifications) Order 2022 (S.I. 2022/74), art. 1, **Sch. 1 para. 3(5)(a)(i)**
- F3** Words in Sch. 23 para. 2(9A)(b) inserted (27.1.2022) by The Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2020 and Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 (Consequential Modifications) Order 2022 (S.I. 2022/74), art. 1, **Sch. 1 para. 3(5)(a)(ii)**
- F4** Sch. 23 para. 2(9B)(aa) inserted (27.1.2022) by The Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2020 and Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 (Consequential Modifications) Order 2022 (S.I. 2022/74), art. 1, **Sch. 1 para. 3(5)(b)(i)**
- F5** Words in Sch. 23 para. 2(9B)(b) inserted (27.1.2022) by The Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2020 and Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 (Consequential Modifications) Order 2022 (S.I. 2022/74), art. 1, **Sch. 1 para. 3(5)(b)(ii)**
- F6** Word in Sch. 23 para. 2(9C) inserted (27.1.2022) by The Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2020 and Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 (Consequential Modifications) Order 2022 (S.I. 2022/74), art. 1, **Sch. 1 para. 3(5)(c)**

Commencement Information

- I1** Sch. 23 para. 2 wholly in force at 1.10.2012; Sch. 23 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 216; Sch. 23 in force for certain purposes at 1.10.2010 by S.I. 2010/2317, **art. 2(14)(e)** (with art. 15); Sch. 23 in force for remaining purposes at 1.10.2012 by S.I. 2012/1569, art. 3(g)

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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](#)