

Talking about Jesus at work and home

# Faith at work: your rights, and the right thing to do

*A short guide for Christians who want to talk about Jesus at work, and to handle it well if they're ever pulled up.*

Guide

**St John's Church, Woking**

Workplace & Neighbourhood Evangelism

Cover photo: St John the Baptist's Church, St John's, Woking, by Hassocks5489 (Wikimedia Commons, public domain)

# Contents


About this booklet 3

1. In a nutshell 5

2. What the law protects 6

3. Where the lines are 7

4. Having a right, and doing the right thing 8

5. Is this a hill to die on? Six questions to pray through 10

6. If your boss or HR pulls you up 11

7. Five situations you might face 12

8. Four real stories from Christians at work 15

9. Where to get help 19

Scripture 20

Read next 21


### At the back


Notes 22


### Before you read

There are things we have the right to do, and there are things that are the right thing to do, and they're not always the same. This guide covers both: what the law actually says about faith at work, and how Christians can respond when a manager or HR challenges them. Sometimes it's right to give way, and sometimes it's right to stand firm. Section 8 has some real stories from Christians who've been pulled up at work (anonymised), including some where it's not clear they got it right. You don't need to read it all in one go. Dip in when you need it. If you're facing something at work right now, you don't have to face it alone. The Workplace and Neighbourhood Evangelism group at St John's would love to pray with you. You can share as much or as little as you like, and you can message the group's leader privately if you'd rather. And if you've got a story of your own, good or bad, please share it with the group's leader. It will only ever be used with your permission, and with names and details changed so no one can be identified.

# About this booklet

If you're facing something at work right now, please don't carry it on your own. Pray, talk to someone you trust at church, and get advice early (section 9 has some places to start). And remember who's holding it all: "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

### Goes with

- *What kind of King?*
- *Good weekend? What did you get up to?*
- *Go on then, tell me what you actually believe*
- *Could God forgive? On the back stairs*
- *Walk up the mountain*
- *Just backdate the invoices*
- *They've replaced my whole team with software*
- *If AI can do my job, what am I for?*
- *Any church near me?*
- *Most Christians pray at me or pretend I don't exist*

and any conversation about faith at work.

### Guides: the series

- *Faith at work: your rights, and the right thing to do* (this guide)
- *When someone you love is in a dark place*
- *The Holy Spirit and our witness*
- *Made male and female, loved by God: a primer on trans people and pronouns*

### How this booklet was made

This booklet was written with the help of AI (Claude, made by Anthropic). The AI did the research and wrote the drafts. A member of St John's chose the topic, decided what it should cover, read it through, asked for changes and approved it.

AI can get things wrong, and it can sound very sure of itself when it does. So the booklet has been through these checks:

- **Quotations.** Bible quotations have been checked word for word against the NIV, and the Westminster Confession, the Prayer Book catechism and the Lausanne Covenant against their texts. Words quoted from court judgments and from the employers' guide in section 2 have been checked against the documents themselves. The Notes say where each one comes from.
- **Theology.** Separate AI reviewers read the booklet against Scripture, the Reformation confessions and what Christians down the centuries have written about conscience, authority and freedom. One reviewer was asked to hunt for error, for overstatement and for anything that might hurt someone going through a hard time at work. Everything they found was put right and checked again.
- **The law.** Every legal claim has been checked against the legislation, the court judgments and Acas guidance, twice over. A separate reviewer then went back to those sources to look for anything wrong or overstated. It's correct as at 25 October 2026, and the Notes give the sources.

It hasn't yet been reviewed by a trained theologian or a member of the clergy. **It hasn't been looked over by a Christian lawyer either, so please read it with caution**, and if you're facing a real situation at work, take advice (section 9 says where).

**Please read it with care.** Even after all these checks, some mistakes may remain, and the law keeps changing. Test what you read against Scripture, as the Bereans did: they "examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11). If you're facing something at work, please get proper advice for your situation. And if something doesn't look right, please let Tim Parr know at timparr40@gmail.com.

The views in this booklet are the author's own. They don't necessarily reflect the views of the leadership of St John's Church.

### The small print

Faith at work: your rights, and the right thing to do · Guide · Version 3.3, October 2026. Law correct as at 25 October 2026. This guide is general information about the law in England, Wales and Scotland, not legal advice; if you need advice, please speak to a professional.

Quotations from other writers are used for comment and discussion; you'll find each source in the Notes.

Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version Anglicised Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 Biblica. Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, an Hachette UK company. All rights reserved. 'NIV' is a registered trademark of Biblica UK trademark number 1448790.

# 1. In a nutshell

- **You're free to talk about your faith at work.** The law protects it, within sensible limits.
- **The line is pressure, not faith.** Pressing after a "no", using power over someone, or ignoring a reasonable instruction is where Christians get into trouble.
- **Having a right doesn't always mean using it.** Sometimes love and the gospel are better served by giving way.
- **But some things aren't ours to give away.** If obeying would mean denying Christ or doing wrong, we stand firm, with gentleness and respect.
- **When you're pulled up:** pray, listen, don't argue on the spot, and get advice early.

> **The law in this guide**
>
> This guide gives general information about the law in England, Wales and Scotland as at 25 October 2026. It isn't legal advice. Some of the cases are from the English courts, which Scottish courts treat as persuasive. Northern Ireland has its own equality law.

## 2. What the law protects

- **Your faith is a protected characteristic** under the Equality Act 2010. An employer mustn't treat you worse because you're a Christian, harass you over it, or punish you for complaining about unfair treatment.
- **The right to hold your beliefs is absolute.** The right to *show* them (talking about them, praying, wearing a cross) is also protected, but it can be limited where that's necessary and proportionate to protect other people (Article 9, European Convention on Human Rights).
- **Ordinary conversation is fine.** Mentioning church, answering a question or sharing your story is ordinary workplace chat. A 2018 employers' guide from ADF International, the Evangelical Alliance and the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship says staff may want to share their church life just as they'd share their excitement about a film or a local football team. It adds that an offer to pray is fine but "should not be pushed" if it's making someone uncomfortable.
- **Employers must act in proportion.** In February 2025 the Court of Appeal ruled that a school's sacking of Kristie Higgs over Facebook posts she'd shared, criticising sex and gender teaching in primary schools, was unlawful discrimination. An employer can object to *how* something was said, and can care about its reputation, but its response has to be proportionate. A speculative risk to its reputation wasn't enough to justify dismissal. The Supreme Court refused the school permission to appeal in June 2025.
- **The belief itself isn't a reason to treat you worse.** In February 2026 the Employment Appeal Tribunal sent part of Felix Ngole's case back to the employment tribunal to be decided again. It said that treating someone worse merely because clients might react badly to the fact that they hold their Christian beliefs would be discrimination that can't be justified. An employer can still ask for reassurance about how you'd do the job. Mr Ngole has appealed against part of that decision, and the Court of Appeal heard his appeal in September 2026. (At the time of writing, in October 2026, it hadn't given its judgment.)
- **New from 30 October 2026:** employers must take all reasonable steps to protect staff from harassment by customers and the public, including over religion. That protects Christians at work. It's also a reminder that when you chat to someone serving *you* (a delivery driver, a carer, the breakdown patrol), they're at work too. A friendly word is still fine; just read the person.

## 3. Where the lines are

- **After a "no".** One invitation is fine. Repeating it after someone has made it clear they'd rather not can become harassment, even if it's kindly meant.
- **When you have power.** If you manage someone, let *them* lead any faith conversation. In a 2016 case, an NHS Trust disciplined a senior occupational therapist who had prayed with a junior Muslim colleague (laying hands on her), given her a book about a Muslim woman's conversion, and invited her to church events. The Employment Appeal Tribunal said the problem wasn't her faith but "unwanted and unwelcome conduct" towards someone junior, "without regard to her own influential position".
- **Patients, pupils and vulnerable clients.** Professional settings have their own rules. In 2019 the Court of Appeal upheld a tribunal's finding that a nurse had been fairly dismissed. She'd kept raising faith with patients after promising her manager she wouldn't unless patients asked.
- **Language about groups of people.** Disagreeing with a belief is lawful. Demeaning language about a group of people can be harassment, and employers can take action over it. It isn't Christlike either.
- **Work time and work systems.** Use breaks, lunch and your own phone. Your employer is entitled to your attention during working hours and can set rules for work email and IT.
- **Online.** What you post, even in your own time, can come back to work, especially on a platform like LinkedIn that names your employer. *Higgs* shows that even strongly worded posts didn't justify sacking someone. But the court still called re-posting them "unwise", and an employer can take proportionate action over genuinely offensive language. Tone matters.

## 4. Having a right, and doing the right thing

The law tells us what we're *allowed* to do. Scripture asks a bigger question: what will honour Christ and help people see Him?

- **We're free, and freedom can be laid down for love.** Paul had every right to be paid by the churches, yet he wrote: "we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:12). "'I have the right to do anything,' you say – but not everything is beneficial" (1 Corinthians 10:23). Following Jesus means "not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others" (Philippians 2:4). Paul's aim was simple: "I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved" (1 Corinthians 10:33). We talk about Jesus at work because He died for our sins and was raised (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). And because our standing with God is secure in Him, we don't need to win every argument or defend our reputation.
- **We honour the people over us.** Peter tells believers to "submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority" (1 Peter 2:13), and he goes on to apply this to work, even to masters "who are harsh" (1 Peter 2:18). He urges us to "live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1 Peter 2:12). Paul told Christian slaves, who had far fewer rights than any employee today, to "show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive" (Titus 2:10). If that was possible for them, it's possible for us. The Prayer Book catechism that generations of Anglicans learned says the same: "To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters" and "To be true and just in all my dealing". And: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18).
- **It's not wrong to use your rights.** Paul used his Roman citizenship when he was about to be flogged without trial, and appealed to Caesar (Acts 22:25–29; 25:11). Standing up for a lawful freedom can protect other Christians too. Rights are a gift to be used wisely, not a weapon, and not something to be ashamed of.

- **Some things aren't ours to give away.** When the authorities ordered the apostles to stop speaking about Jesus, they answered: "We must obey God rather than human beings!" (Acts 5:29; see also Acts 4:19–20). As the Westminster Confession (1646, chapter XX, section 2) puts it, "God alone is Lord of the conscience". The same chapter also warns that Christian liberty is no excuse to "oppose any lawful power" (section 4). If obeying would mean denying Christ, lying, or doing what God forbids, we stand firm. We still do it respectfully, like Daniel, who "asked the chief official for permission", then proposed a sensible ten-day test, and found that God had given him favour (Daniel 1:8–14).
- **And if we suffer, let it be for Christ, not for being difficult.** When Jesus was treated unjustly, "he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly" (1 Peter 2:23). "If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name" (1 Peter 4:15–16). The aim is to be "as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

## 5. Is this a hill to die on? Six questions to pray through

1. **Would going along with it mean doing wrong?** Denying Christ, lying, or doing what God forbids? If so, this is Acts 5:29 ground: stand firm, graciously, and get advice. If not, keep going.
2. **Is this about my freedom, or someone else's good?** Giving up a personal freedom so as not to hinder the gospel is often the loving thing to do (1 Corinthians 9:12).
3. **Will pushing back help or hinder the gospel with *these* people?** How will my manager and colleagues see Jesus in how I respond?
4. **Is there a quieter way to keep doing good?** Pray privately, talk on breaks, use your own phone, follow up in person.
5. **Would standing up for this protect others?** Sometimes a calm, lawful stand helps other Christians, or colleagues of other faiths, after you.
6. **Have I prayed, and asked wise people?** "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22). Talk to your church, a trusted Christian friend, and if needed a legal adviser, *before* you decide.

# 6. If your boss or HR pulls you up

## Before or at the start

- **Pray.** Ask for a calm heart and the right words (Luke 12:12).
- **Listen first.** "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19). Find out exactly what the concern is: what was said or done, who raised it, and which policy it relates to.
- **Don't argue on the spot.** "A gentle answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1). You can say, "Thanks for telling me. Can I think about that and come back to you?"

## If it's informal (a quiet word)

- Often the simplest and most Christlike response is to adjust and move on, as in the LinkedIn story in section 8. Say sorry for any upset you caused, but you don't need to apologise for Jesus. That isn't denying your faith. It's showing it.
- If you genuinely think the request is unfair, you can ask politely for the reason, so you know where the lines are next time.

## If it's formal (an investigation, a disciplinary, a written warning)

- **Ask for the allegation in writing.** You're entitled to know what you're accused of.
- **Keep notes** of what was said, when, and who was there. Keep copies of emails and messages.
- **Don't sign anything, resign, or post about it online in a hurry.**
- **Be gracious, but accurate.** It's right to be sorry someone was hurt. Don't agree to a version of events that isn't true.
- **You have a legal right to bring someone** to a formal disciplinary or grievance hearing if you ask: a colleague or a trade union representative. This doesn't usually cover the earlier investigation meeting, or a friend from church or a lawyer, unless your employer agrees.
- **Get advice early**, before the meeting if you can: see section 9.
- **Watch the deadlines.** If you might need to bring a tribunal claim, the time limits are strict: generally six months less one day for things that happen on or after 1 October 2026 (three months less one day before that), and you must contact Acas for "early conciliation" first. Praying and waiting is right, but don't let the clock run out.
- **Stay gracious throughout.** How you handle it may be the clearest witness your colleagues ever see.

# 7. Five situations you might face

### "That post needs to come down"

- **What's happening:** your manager asks you to remove something you've posted or shared out of Christian care, as in the LinkedIn story in section 8.
- **What the law says:** being *asked* to take something down isn't a punishment. If it was sincerely meant and not offensive, an employer would struggle to justify *punishing* you for it (*Higgs*). LinkedIn is different from a personal account, because your profile names your employer. In *Higgs* it mattered that the posts were on a personal account, in her maiden name, with no mention of the school.
- **The right thing:** usually, take it down graciously. It costs little, it honours your manager, and it keeps the relationship open for the gospel. If it keeps happening, or you're disciplined, get advice.

> "No problem, I'll take it down. I was only trying to help, but I understand. Could you tell me what the concern was, so I know for next time?"

### "Please don't keep your Bible on the desk" (or "Take the cross off")

- **What's happening:** a manager asks you to remove a visible sign of your faith.
- **What the law says:** a small, discreet sign of faith carries real weight. In 2013 the European Court of Human Rights said British Airways had been wrong to stop Nadia Eweida wearing a small cross (*Eweida v UK*). In the same judgment, though, a nurse lost her case because the hospital had a genuine health-and-safety reason. An employer needs a good reason, applied fairly to everyone.
- **The right thing:** ask politely for the reason, and whether others can keep personal items too. Often a quiet conversation sorts it out. If the ban seems aimed only at Christians, get advice.

### "Don't offer to pray with clients"

- **What's happening:** you work with patients, pupils or vulnerable clients, and you're told not to raise faith or offer prayer.
- **What the law says:** in professional settings, employers are usually entitled to set this rule, and courts have supported them (the nurse's case above).
- **The right thing:** follow the instruction, and pray for the people you serve *privately* (1 Timothy 2:1). That's not denying Christ. The apostles were ordered not to speak about Jesus at all. This is different: a rule about how you act in a paid professional role, towards people who may be vulnerable, while you stay free to talk about Jesus everywhere else. If an employer ever tried to stop you speaking about Jesus at all, even in your own time, that would be different, and you should get advice. If someone asks *you* about faith or prayer, check your professional code and ask your manager how to respond. Many policies allow a brief answer. If the rule seems to apply only to Christians, or stops you giving a straight answer even when someone asks you directly, get advice.

### "A colleague has complained about our conversation"

- **What's happening:** HR tells you someone felt uncomfortable after you talked about your faith.
- **What the law says:** it depends on what happened. A single, friendly conversation is unlikely to be harassment. Repeated pressure after a "no", or pressure from a manager on a junior, might be.
- **The right thing:** listen, and find out exactly what was said. Say sorry for any hurt you caused, without apologising for Jesus. Agree to leave the subject unless *they* raise it. If you're warned simply for having talked about your faith at all, get advice.

> "I'm really sorry they felt uncomfortable. That's the last thing I'd want. I won't raise it again unless they want to. I'm a Christian, and I'm glad to answer questions if people ask, but I never want anyone to feel pressured."

### "We need you to say or do something you believe is wrong"

- **What's happening:** you're asked to do something that goes against your conscience: to mislead a customer, falsify figures, or sign up to a statement you believe is untrue.
- **What the law says:** anything dishonest or illegal is different. Whistleblowing law may protect you if you report wrongdoing properly (get advice from the charity Protect first). On matters of conscience, the best-known cases have gone the employer's way (see the Notes), though a lot depends on the job, what exactly is asked, and whether a reasonable alternative is offered.
- **The right thing:** this may be Acts 5:29 ground, so pray and take advice early. Decline respectfully, explain briefly why, and offer an alternative, like Daniel. Keep your tone gentle, and be prepared to accept the cost.

# 8. Four real stories from Christians at work

These are real stories. Names and details have been changed so no one can be identified. They're here because we learn more from real situations, including ones where it's not clear the person got it right, than from a list of rules.

### The LinkedIn comment

- **What happened:** a Christian professional saw a LinkedIn post that mentioned pornography addiction. They left a short comment saying that if anyone wanted help, there was a great Christian app with some really good resources. Not long after, their boss had a word and said the comment was inappropriate and needed to come down. They didn't think it was inappropriate, or that it would bring the company into disrepute, and they probably could have pushed back. But, in their words, "it's not a hill I'm prepared to die on". They'd been asked, so out of respect they took it down.
- **What we can learn:** this is the heart of this guide. There are things we have the right to do, and there are things that are the right thing to do. Giving way here cost little, honoured the boss, and kept the relationship open. See "That post needs to come down" in section 7.

## The leaving gift

- **What happened:** a Christian had been coaching someone at work. It was formal, paid coaching, and during the sessions the other person mentioned how hard they found it to forgive people. When the coaching finished and the person was leaving the organisation, the coach gave them a leaving present: a really good novel about forgiveness by a popular Christian author (the kind of book lots of Christians give to friends), a Bible, a thank-you card, and a written account of their own faith story. They knew the person was interested in faith, so they thought it would be appreciated. It was genuinely from the heart. Later they heard the person had been upset by the gifts and had made a complaint. A senior colleague talked it through with them and just said, "You need to be careful with those kinds of things." Nothing more came of it. Looking back, they're not sure they got it right. They don't think they overstepped the mark, but it clearly upset the person.
- **What the law says:** a one-off leaving gift, freely given with no pressure and not repeated, is unlikely to be harassment in law. But coaching is a professional relationship of trust, a bit like the "professional settings" in section 3, so extra care is wise.
- **What we can learn:** the gift was generous and from the heart, and nothing in it was wrong in itself. The questions are about proportion and permission. A Bible, a Christian novel *and* a faith story all at once is a lot. And because the person had shared something personal in coaching, linking the gift to it may have felt to them as though the coaching had been a route into faith. A lighter touch might have been one gift, offered rather than given: "I read a brilliant novel about forgiveness. Would you like my copy?" That makes it easy to say no. And remember that some people will be offended by the gospel itself, however gently it's offered: "we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 1:23). Offence isn't always a sign we did wrong.

## The book table

- **What happened:** a Christian trainer, employed by a training company, was sent to run a graduate programme for a large corporate client. In one session everyone was invited to share something they felt strongly about, but the trainer was called away before their turn. So at the end of the programme they laid out a table of free books, mostly stories of people from all sorts of backgrounds who had met Jesus, and said, "These are my passion: stories of people who've changed their minds about something. Take one if you'd like; if not, that's absolutely fine." When someone asked, "Are these religious books?" they said yes, some of them are. In a few books, where they felt the gospel got a bit lost, they'd tucked in a short gospel leaflet. Later a senior manager at the client saw one of the books and the leaflet. The trainer was asked to explain, and was taken off the rest of the programme. Some time later they were made redundant. They don't think the two were connected, but you never know. Looking back, they think their mistake was the leaflets.
- **What the law says:** the Equality Act protects contract workers (people supplied by their employer to work for a client) from being taken off work because of their religion (section 41). The question would be whether the client was objecting to *how* the literature was handed out (for example, leaflets tucked inside books) or to the Christian faith itself, and whether its response was proportionate. Objecting to the manner can be lawful; objecting to the faith isn't. If you ever suspect a redundancy or dismissal is linked to your faith, get advice quickly, because the time limits are short (see section 6).
- **What we can learn:** offering books openly, with no pressure, was a good and generous thing. What caused the trouble was that it *looked* hidden. The books weren't clearly labelled as Christian, and the leaflets were tucked inside, even though nothing was meant to be secret. Paul's principle is openness: "we have renounced secret and shameful ways… by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience" (2 Corinthians 4:2). Being upfront is both clearer and safer: "These are Christian books: stories of people whose lives changed when they met Jesus. Help yourself if you're interested." And the graduates were outsiders who might form their view of Jesus from how Christians behave: "Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity" (Colossians 4:5).

### The all-staff email

- **What happened:** a Christian employee emailed everyone in their company, inviting them to a lunchtime service at a church nearby: "Very welcome to join me. Could change your life." Several people complained, and their boss took them to HR, where they were told they couldn't send messages like that and were pointed to the IT policy. They asked, "What if I'd invited everyone to the pub this evening?" Apparently that would have been fine. They didn't get any advice, and never knew where they stood.
- **What the law says:** many employers limit all-staff emails to work business under their IT policy, and they're entitled to, *if they apply it consistently*. The question about the pub was a fair one. If social invitations to everyone are routinely allowed but a church invitation isn't, treating the religious one worse could be discrimination. It's reasonable to ask that politely, and to get advice if the answer seems unfair.
- **What we can learn:** inviting people to church is a good thing to do. The way it's done matters. An all-staff email with "Could change your life" reaches everyone in the company, most of whom didn't ask, and it can land like a sales pitch. Invitations usually go best personally, to people you know, or through opt-in routes where people choose to look: a Christian staff network, a noticeboard, or the events page on the intranet. A personal "I'm going to a carol service on Thursday. Fancy coming?" is hard to complain about, and much more likely to get a yes.

## 9. Where to get help

- **The Christian Institute**: legal and free-speech updates, and a Legal Defence Fund for Christians. christian.org.uk
- **Christian Legal Centre** (Christian Concern): advice and legal support. Read their "Faith at work: what you need to know" (April 2024). christianconcern.com
- **Acas**: free, impartial advice on employment rights, and the "early conciliation" step before any tribunal claim. acas.org.uk
- **Your trade union**, if you're a member.
- **Protect**: whistleblowing advice. protect-advice.org.uk
- **The Free Speech Union** (a secular free-speech group with a casework team for members). Their podcast interview with Revd Dr Bernard Randall, the school chaplain who was reported to Prevent over a sermon, is worth a listen: "Reported to Prevent, Ousted from Job & Cancelled". freespeechunion.org
- **Your church.** Please don't face it alone. Tell someone you trust at church, and let them pray with you.

# Scripture

> "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." (1 Peter 3:15–16)

> "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." (Colossians 3:23)

> "We must obey God rather than human beings!" (Acts 5:29)

## Read next

- Christian Legal Centre, "Faith at work: what you need to know" (April 2024)
- The Christian Institute, "Christian school worker vindicated at Court of Appeal" (Kristie Higgs, February 2025)
- LICC, *Fruitfulness on the Frontline*: being a faithful Christian in everyday work, not just in the "big moments"
- The Lausanne Covenant (1974), a landmark worldwide evangelical statement, section 13: it asks governments to "guarantee freedom of thought and conscience, and freedom to practise and propagate religion" (text)

# Notes

These notes give the sources for the law in this guide, so you (or an adviser) can check them for yourself. Everything here was checked again on 25 October 2026. Where a court is quoted, the words have been checked against the judgment itself.

## 1. In a nutshell

**England, Wales and Scotland** (page 5). The Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Rights Act 2025 apply across England, Wales and Scotland. *Higgs* is a decision of the Court of Appeal of England and Wales, so Scottish courts treat it as persuasive rather than binding. Decisions of the Employment Appeal Tribunal, like *Ngole*, apply across Great Britain.

## 2. What the law protects

**Your faith is a protected characteristic** (page 6). Equality Act 2010, section 10 (religion or belief), with direct discrimination in section 13, harassment in section 26 and victimisation (being punished for complaining) in section 27 (legislation.gov.uk). Acas sums these up in its guide to religion or belief discrimination.

**Holding and showing a belief** (page 6). Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights is part of UK law through the Human Rights Act 1998 (Schedule 1). The European Court of Human Rights explained the difference between holding a belief (absolute) and showing it (which can be limited) in *Eweida and Others v United Kingdom* (2013), paragraph 80, and the Court of Appeal quoted that passage in *Higgs* (paragraphs 32 and 33).

**The employers' guide** (page 6). *Christianity in the Workplace: An Employer's Guide to Christian Beliefs* (ADF International, the Evangelical Alliance and the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship, 2018), read it. It's a guide written by Christian organisations, not a statement of the law.

**Kristie Higgs** (page 6). *Higgs v Farmor's School* [2025] EWCA Civ 109, judgment of 12 February 2025 (read it). The court accepted that a school can care about its reputation, but found the risk here "speculative at best", because the posts were on her personal account, in her maiden name, with no mention of the school (paragraph 161). It called the re-posting "unwise" (paragraph 163) but held that dismissal wasn't a proportionate response. The Supreme Court refused the school permission to appeal on 4 June 2025 (case UKSC/2025/0040).

**Felix Ngole** (page 6). *Ngole v Touchstone Leeds* [2026] EAT 29, judgment of 16 February 2026 (read it). The words about clients reacting badly "merely to the fact" that he held his beliefs are in paragraph 108. The Appeal Tribunal accepted that the charity could ask for reassurance about how he'd support service users (paragraphs 104 and 118). It rejected some of his grounds of appeal (paragraph 121), and sent the parts that succeeded back to the employment tribunal (paragraphs 118, 119 and 122). Mr Ngole appealed, and the Court of Appeal heard the case on 28 and 29 September 2026 (judiciary.uk). As at 25 October 2026 no judgment had been given.

**Harassment by customers and the public** (page 6). The Employment Rights Act 2025, section 21, adds a new duty to section 40 of the Equality Act: an employer must not "permit a third party to harass" an employee, and it does so only if the harassment happens in the course of the employee's work and the employer failed to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent it (section 21). It comes into force on 30 October 2026 (SI 2026/1065, regulation 3). It covers religion or belief because "harass" has the same meaning as in section 26 (section 26). Acas has a guide for employers: harassment law changes.

## 3. Where the lines are

**After a "no"** (page 7). Whether conduct is harassment depends on its "purpose or effect", and the tribunal takes into account how the other person saw it, the other circumstances, and whether it was reasonable for it to have that effect (Equality Act 2010, section 26(1) and (4)). That's why something kindly meant can still cross the line.

**The occupational therapist** (page 7). *Wasteney v East London NHS Foundation Trust*, UKEAT/0157/15, Employment Appeal Tribunal, judgment of 7 April 2016 (summary and judgment). She was the one bringing the claim. Her claims of discrimination and harassment against the Trust failed. The quoted words are from the Appeal Tribunal's judgment, describing what the employment tribunal had found about why she was disciplined.

**The nurse** (page 7). *Kuteh v Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust* [2019] EWCA Civ 818, judgment of 14 May 2019 (read it). She had assured her manager she wouldn't raise religion "unless a patient asked". The claim was for unfair dismissal, and the court held it was "plainly open" to the tribunal to find the dismissal fair.

**Online** (page 7). See *Higgs* above (paragraphs 161 and 163).

## 6. If your boss or HR pulls you up

**Bringing someone with you** (page 11). Employment Relations Act 1999, section 10 (legislation.gov.uk): the right applies to a disciplinary or grievance hearing when you reasonably ask, and the companion can be a fellow worker or a trade union official. Acas: "In a disciplinary investigation meeting, there is no legal right to be accompanied", though it's good practice to allow it (Acas).

**Time limits** (page 11). The Employment Rights Act 2025, section 152 and Schedule 12, doubled most tribunal time limits from 1 October 2026 (section 152). The new limits apply where the thing you're complaining about happened on or after that date (SI 2026/954, regulations 3 and 4). Acas puts it as "6 months minus 1 day for most claims" (Acas time limits). On early conciliation, Acas says: "You must notify Acas if you want to make a claim to an employment tribunal" (Acas early conciliation).

## 7. Five situations you might face

**The cross** (page 12). *Eweida and Others v United Kingdom*, European Court of Human Rights, judgment of 15 January 2013. By five votes to two the court found that Ms Eweida's rights had been breached; it found unanimously that Ms Chaplin's had not, because of "the protection of health and safety on a hospital ward" (the judgment on HUDOC; summaries: UK Human Rights Blog, ICLRS).

**Prayer with clients** (page 13). See *Kuteh* above.

**Matters of conscience** (page 14). In the same judgment, *Eweida and Others v United Kingdom*, two other Christians lost: Ms Ladele, a registrar, and Mr McFarlane, a relationship counsellor, who had each been dismissed for refusing duties they believed would condone homosexuality (no violation, by five votes to two for Ms Ladele and unanimously for Mr McFarlane). Christians have more often won when the issue was how they *expressed* their beliefs, as in *Higgs* and *Ngole*, than when they refused part of their job.

**Whistleblowing** (page 14). Protect gives free, confidential advice on whether and how the law protects you.

## 8. Four real stories from Christians at work

**Contract workers** (page 17). Equality Act 2010, section 41: a "principal" (the client) must not discriminate against a contract worker, including "by not allowing the worker to do, or to continue to do, the work" (section 41).

**The all-staff email** (page 18). Treating someone less favourably because of their religion is direct discrimination (Equality Act 2010, section 13). Whether a church invitation was treated worse than a pub invitation, and why, would be the question.

## Other sources

Bible quotations are from the New International Version (Anglicised), checked on BibleGateway. The Westminster Confession (1646) is quoted from chapter XX (text); the words "God alone is Lord of the conscience" and "oppose any lawful power" are the same in the 1646 text and later editions. The Prayer Book catechism is from the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer. The Lausanne Covenant (1974), section 13, is on the Lausanne Movement's website.



> "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters"
>
> Colossians 3:23

## St John's Church, Woking

Workplace & Neighbourhood Evangelism

Cover photo: St John the Baptist's Church, St John's, Woking, by Hassocks5489 (Wikimedia Commons, public domain)