



RESOURCE SHEET 2 (v2)

WARNING: STAY OUT OF THE SUN, DRINK WATER, CELEBRATE THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Slap on the sunscreen – it's the hottest day for a decade and health warnings are being doled out like sweets given to fancy-dressed children on Halloween. If only misguided government proposals also came with their own health warnings... if they did the current plans to repeal the Human Rights Act would register pretty high on the 'caution - proceed carefully or not at all' scale.

That is because there is no legitimate reason for repealing the Human Rights Act. Unlike the hot weather, which is always bemoaned by us in the UK almost as much as we celebrate it ('It's nice, but it's a bit too hot now, isn't it?'), the Human Rights Act benefits us all.

It allows every one of us to make the sure the government – yes, the same one that is trying to repeal it – respect our rights. It is the Human Rights Act that allowed teenage rape victim 'Laura', who wasn't believed by police when she reported the crime and scandalously ended up being arrested herself (she later attempted suicide because of her ordeal), to force the police to accept their wrongdoing.

It allowed a mother fleeing domestic violence to stop a local authority taking her children into care; ensured gay couples can inherit from each other if one of them dies, in the same way as heterosexual couples can; and made sure elderly couples wanting to stay together in care homes after decades of marriage, are able to.

These are the real, every day stories of the Human Rights Act and who it protects. You, me, your grandparents, your sister, your sister's friend's mum. But not your sister's friend's mum's cat, as some would have you believe.

Unfortunately our human rights are given a bad rep by some. Almost all of the stories about it that sound too ridiculous to be true are just that, ridiculous and untrue.

There's the comical one about the man who was not deported because he had a pet cat. Complete nonsense – the judge mentioned the fact that he had a cat, but it had nothing to do with the final decision that was made, which was actually because the Home Office had failed to apply its own guidance dealing with unmarried partners of people settled in the UK.

In a recent parliamentary debate no less than 12 out of 16 MPs who spoke – from Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem and SNP parties – stood up to express support for human rights and warn against the government's proposals.

A common theme that MPs raised was how complicated repealing the Act would be and for such little gain. We say: there would be no gain. Don't risk our rights – heed the health warning on this one and keep the Human Rights Act.