

The right not to be punished for something which wasn't against the law when you did it

This right is one of the 16 human rights (also called Articles) in the Human Rights Act. It is Article 7.

When could this right matter to you?



If you are punished for doing something that wasn't against the law when you did it.



If you do something against the law, but the punishment you get is worse than it should be.



If the law is so confusing that nobody can understand what is a crime and what isn't.



Your right not to be punished for something which wasn't against the law when you did it is an absolute right.

This means staff in public services can never punish you unless there is a law saying they can.

What do staff in public services have to do about my right?



They have to **respect** your right.

This means police and judges should not punish you for something that wasn't against the law when you did it.



They have to **protect** your right.

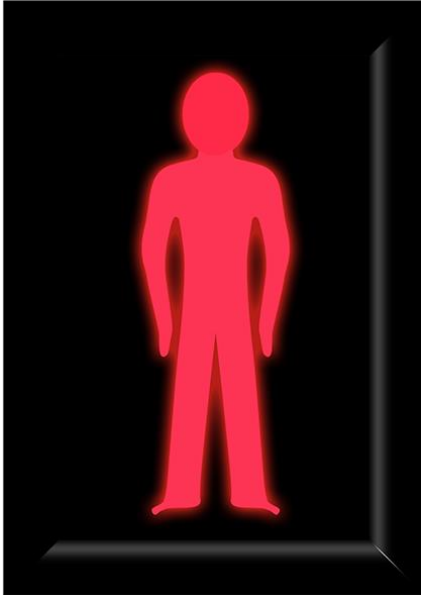
This means staff have to do things to protect this right and make sure you are involved in conversations about your rights.



They have to **fulfil** your right.

This means that if something goes wrong, staff need to find why and try to stop things going wrong again.

To think about this right in real life, let's imagine a situation...



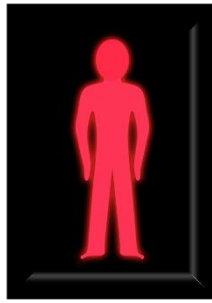
You are out for a walk and you get to a crossing which is showing a red man.

This means you shouldn't cross the road because it might not be safe.



You know it isn't against the law to cross over when the red man is showing, but it might not be very safe.

There are no cars coming, so you decide to cross the road even though the red man is showing.



Two weeks later, a new law is made which makes it against the law to cross the road when a red man is showing.



Because of your right not to be punished for something which wasn't against the law when you did it, you will not be punished for crossing the road at a red man.

This is because it was not against the law when you did it.