

Dear Right Honourable Members of the House,

This letter calls on MPs of all parties to vote for the recognition and prevention of Afro hair discrimination by updating the 2010 Equality Act. Hair discrimination is a pernicious form of oppression, which dates back to the slave trade, when African heads were routinely shaved and their Afro hair was categorised as subnormal and animalistic. Unfortunately, these attitudes are still pervasive in 21st Century Britain. People with Afro hair can [experience](#) discrimination, harassment and assault in UK workplaces, schools and children's [homes](#).

World Afro Day is calling for change to the Equality Act to protect Afro hair, through the '100 Voices, 100 Words' Campaign. Influential supporters like Mel B, Beverley Knight, Patrick Hutchinson, Fleur East, Evelyn Forde MBE and Professor Patrick Vernon OBE and their statements can be read [here](#). While the current government seeks to strengthen employment and equality laws, hair should definitely be included. Previous [research](#) from World Afro Day® and De Montfort University shows that 95% of people with Afro hair want the UK law updated to specifically prohibit Afro hair discrimination. We are encouraging every MP to collect/download an education pack from www.worldafroday.com to be better informed on this issue.

[Research](#) shows that 98% of UK Black people feel that their identity is compromised to fit in at workplaces, with their hair being a key issue. The 2023 Workplace Hair Acceptance [report](#) surveyed 1000 respondents and showed a real risk to jobs. 1 in 3 company decision-makers could possibly deny a Black woman a job because of her natural Afro hair and then reverse the decision if she straightened her hair. 1 in 5 said that this could definitely happen in their workplace.

Many UK children are regularly punished and told that their Afro hair and African heritage styles are unacceptable at school. This has been common practice for generations: 2013 Children's Commissioner states: "the exclusion of children for hairstyles commonly worn by Black boys, such as cornrows..." Plus, there are also [serious concerns](#) for health, with higher levels of endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDC) found in many Afro hair products. These chemicals have been linked to higher rates of cancers, infertility, early puberty and uterine fibroids etc. According to a British Psychological Society [article](#), there is also ignorance and bias in the UK Mental Health sector, branding Afro hair washing practices in a derogatory manner e.g. 'self-neglect.'

For too long, people with Afro hair have experienced unjust treatment in UK society and the current law is not direct enough to govern businesses, schools and the public to prevent serious harm. The omission of hair as a protected characteristic from the law, has facilitated everyday discrimination and the normalisation of Afro hair as inferior in every sphere of life. Working people with Afro hair have been told to fix, hide or straighten their natural hair if they want to progress. Will the Labour Government offer a new deal for people with Afro hair so that they "are able to enjoy dignity and respect in their jobs, whilst living fulfilled lives outside of their work"?

The World Afro Day organisation is calling on the UK government to 'fix the law, not our hair' and become the first Western nation to introduce a national law to end Afro hair discrimination. This long overdue legislation will not only be a beacon of freedom in the UK

but could also influence other nations to end hair discrimination, which has oppressed African descendants for generations.

This letter is signed by 100+ influential people and their 100 words of support are [here](#).