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| **The Human Rights Act’s****1998****UK****Article 11:**Freedom of assembly and associationDemeanourYou also have the right to form and be part of a trade union, a political party or any another association or voluntary group. Nobody has the right to force you to join a protest, trade union, political party or another association.**Are there any restrictions to this right?**There are some situations where a public authority can restrict your rights to freedom of assembly and association.This is only the case where the authority can show that its action is lawful, necessary and proportionate in order to:* protect national security or public safety
* prevent disorder or crime
* protect health or morals, or
* protect the rights and freedoms of other people.

Action is ‘proportionate’ when it is appropriate and no more than necessary to address the issue concerned.  You may face a wider range of restrictions if you work for the armed forces, the police or the Civil Service.**What the law says.**Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association.1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.
2. No restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of these rights other than such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces, of the police or of the administration of the state.

**Example case;**In August 2010, the English Defence League (EDL) planned a protest in Bradford. A counter demonstration by Unite Against Fascism was also planned. Some local people wanted the protest banned and there were concerns about a repeat of the violent clashes that had happened at previous EDL events. West Yorkshire Police had a duty to protect the protest unless there was clear evidence that violence would occur. They examined the human rights aspect of the situation and talked to local people, in particular the Muslim community, about the right to peaceful protest. After this explanation the community realised that the police had to allow the protest. Community groups worked with the police to persuade young people not to get involved in criminal activity on the day.See the publication ‘Human rights, human lives: a guide to the Human Rights Act for public authorities’ for more examples and legal case studies that show how human rights. |