



Creating a human rights support solution with Warrington Speak Up

July 2021 – June 2022

1. Context

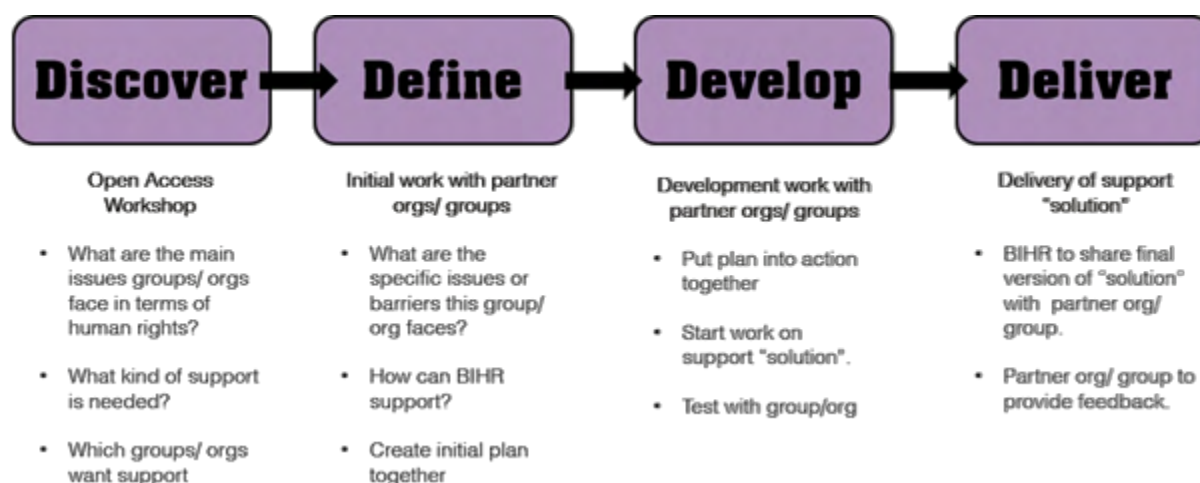
The British Institute of Human Rights is a small, independent charity working UK-wide. Our mission is to enable change through human rights by supporting people and organisations to use human rights advocacy and approaches in their everyday life to achieve positive social change. This sees us [working with community groups](#) to enable them to use human rights advocacy to tackle social justice issues affecting the people they support.

In July 2021, [BIHR embarked on a new programme of work](#) to support community groups and voluntary groups across the UK. The aim of this project was to co-design human rights support “solutions” with four partner organisations using human rights.

One of our partners was [Warrington Speak Up](#), an independent advocacy organisation in the north-west of England. They have a team of professional advocates who support people with care and support needs to have their voice heard, and they also create resources and hold groups to enable people to advocate for themselves.

2. Our involvement

Co-design is at the core of this project. Our approach to co-design used the below 4-stage process to ensure that the views and opinions of our partners and the eventual end “users” of the solution are central to the development.



2.1 Discover

In July 2021, BIHR hosted a workshop with community, campaigning and advocacy organisations across the UK who were interested in working with BIHR longer-term to support their human rights advocacy.

This session was so valuable for BIHR as a human rights charity, and the feedback we received from the groups and organisations that joined made it clear that having a space to have conversations and build relationships was very helpful.

You can read more about the 'Discover' workshop and our key findings from it [here](#).

2.2 Define

Following the 'Discover' stage, Warrington Speak Up were selected as one of our four partners organisations. They were then invited to a 'Define' workshop where we worked together to further define the ideas for human rights support "solutions".

Warrington Speak Up identified a need for the people they support to become more knowledgeable and confident to talk about their rights in conversations with the staff who support them, such as social workers or nurses.

Warrington Speak Up: Solution Statement

As someone who has learning disabilities and needs support at home, I want to understand my human rights, so that I can be confident in stating what I want and what I am going to do day to day (rather than asking permission).

2.3 Develop

Over several months, a member of the BIHR team worked alongside the staff and self-advocates at Warrington Speak Up to develop the human rights support "solution".

Mapping

First, a mapping exercise was completed to identify existing resources aimed at supporting people with a learning disability to know and use their human rights. It was found that BIHR, Warrington Speak Up and other organisations had already produced digital Easy Read resources to support this need. However, digital exclusion was identified as a barrier for people with a learning disability looking for more information about their rights, and there was an opportunity to produce a new physical Easy Read human rights resource including real life stories of where people's rights have and have not been looked after. Warrington Speak Up also proposed approaching [Photosymbols](#), which has a picture library featuring

people with learning disabilities as the main characters, to create some new images relating to key human rights.

Through discussion with the self-advocates at Warrington Speak Up, it was decided that a set of Easy Read physical human rights postcards would support them to understand and use their rights every day. Five key human rights, protected by the Human Rights Act, were selected to be included in the postcards:

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- The right to life (Article 2)
- The right to be safe from serious harm (Article 3) – also known as the right to be free from torture and inhuman and degrading treatment
- The right to liberty (Article 5)
- The right to respect for private and family life, home and contact (Article 8)
- The right to be treated fairly (Article 14) – also known as the right to be free from discrimination

Creation

Developing the human rights postcards involved a back-and-forth process between BIHR and Warrington Speak Up. Co-production was at the heart of this work, ensuring that the views and ideas of the group of self-advocates were listened to throughout the design process, from their initial ideas and stories to their views on the final draft.

To develop the new Photosymbols images, BIHR ran a co-production workshop with some of the self-advocates at Warrington Speak Up. At the workshop, the group was given an introduction to the Human Rights Act and an explanation of how the five key human rights work. They were then invited to share their ideas, which were recorded and sent to Photosymbols to be brought to life with actors.

Below is a slide from the co-production workshop with some ideas about what an image on the right to respect for private and family, home and contact might look like, alongside the finished image produced by Photosymbols.



The content for the human rights postcards also saw BIHR and Warrington Speak Up working together to produce something that was accessible and relevant to the group of self-advocates, as well as to people with a learning disability more broadly.

The staff at Warrington Speak Up supported the group of self-advocates to understand their rights using BIHR’s resources, and to think about times where their rights have been relevant. This included:

- A person being denied access to medical treatment purely based on their diagnosis of a learning disability.
- A couple being prevented from spending time alone as one person had a physical health condition.
- A person not being allowed out to a gig at night due to staffing shortages.

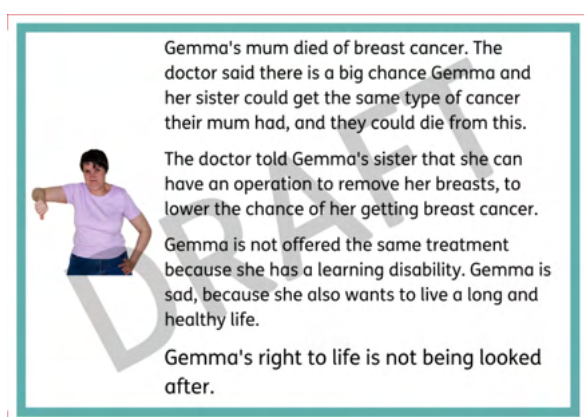
Reflecting on situations where human rights are at risk can be upsetting, and this was particularly difficult for the group, however their stories would be used to help themselves and others to speak up if they are worried about their rights. These stories, as well as stories from BIHR’s wider work supporting people and communities, were anonymised and included in the final draft of the postcards. Finally, BIHR brought our expertise in the Human Rights Act and its everyday application to ensure a clear and accurate explanation of the rights was included in the postcards.

Testing

Testing the support “solution” was done in two stages. The first draft of the postcards was tested with the group of self-advocates at Warrington Speak Up. A second draft was shared at a Regional Forum meeting on Zoom in January and February 2022, where self-advocates from all over the north-west of England meet to discuss issues affecting them. Several changes were made in response to the valuable feedback of the group to ensure the postcards were as accessible, informative and impactful as possible.

An example below illustrates some of the changes made after testing the resource and taking on board people’s comments and ideas. Another key change involved creating extra postcards to explain difficult words.

First Draft



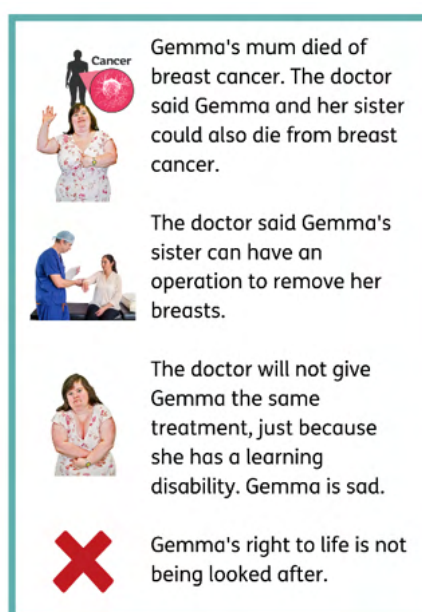
Gemma's mum died of breast cancer. The doctor said there is a big chance Gemma and her sister could get the same type of cancer their mum had, and they could die from this.


The doctor told Gemma's sister that she can have an operation to remove her breasts, to lower the chance of her getting breast cancer.


Gemma is not offered the same treatment because she has a learning disability. Gemma is sad, because she also wants to live a long and healthy life.


Gemma's right to life is not being looked after.


Final Draft



 Gemma's mum died of breast cancer. The doctor said Gemma and her sister could also die from breast cancer.

 The doctor said Gemma's sister can have an operation to remove her breasts.

 The doctor will not give Gemma the same treatment, just because she has a learning disability. Gemma is sad.

 Gemma's right to life is not being looked after.

2.4 Deliver

Launch Event

On 17th May 2022, BIHR and Warrington Speak Up ran an online launch event to celebrate the new Easy Read human rights postcards. The launch was attended by the group of self-advocates who helped to create the new support “solution” and people from the Regional Forum, as well as people from nine different self-advocacy and support organisations across England and Wales.

On the same day, BIHR and Warrington Speak Up spoke on the [National Development Team for Inclusion](#)'s Community-Led Support festival, sharing the resource with community groups and staff who work in public bodies.

BIHR created a video to share at the launch event, explaining this project and where the idea for the postcards came from, and giving the staff and advocates from Warrington Speak Up and the actors from Photosymbols an opportunity to speak about their involvement in developing the resource.



[Click here to watch the launch video.](#)

Sharing the human rights support “solution”

The full set of 13 double-sided postcards is [available for download for free from BIHR's website](#), in image and PDF formats. BIHR also arranged for 200 packs of the postcards to be printed and made available to order for self-advocates, self-advocacy groups, community and voluntary sector organisations, and individuals supporting people with a learning disability.

The resource was shared on BIHR's social media accounts and newsletter, and was sent directly to our contacts who have previously expressed an interest in Easy Read materials.

3. Outcome

Evaluation processes for this project have been largely qualitative, based on the verbal and written feedback provided by those involved. This was gathered via email communication, on workshops and in clips recorded for the launch video.

Warrington Speak Up

The aim of our partnership work with Warrington Speak Up was to create a resource which supports people with a learning disability to understand and speak up for their human rights. As part of the launch video, the group of self-advocates were asked to share their thoughts on the human rights postcards. They gave the following answers:

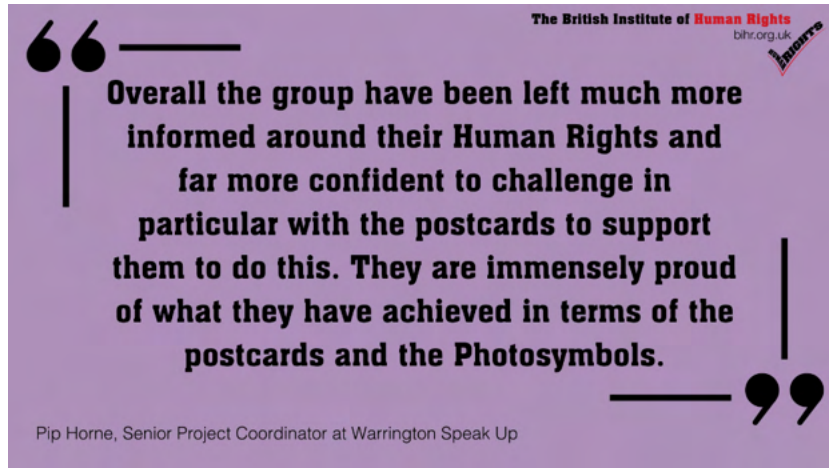
What do you think about the postcards you have helped to make?



The staff at Warrington Speak Up fed back on how they think the postcards



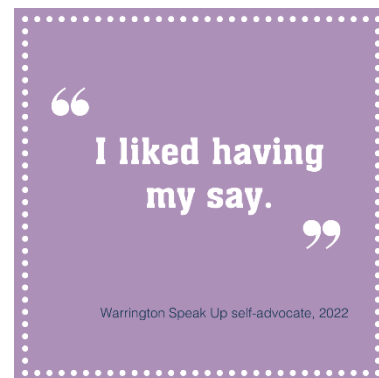
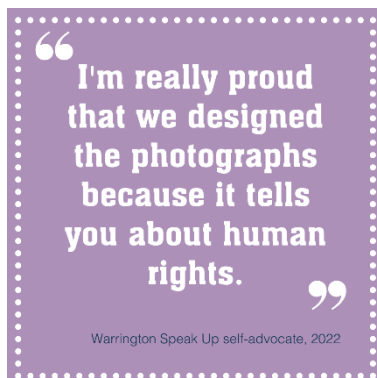
The staff at Warrington Speak Up also fed back on how they think the postcards have impacted on the group of self-advocates:



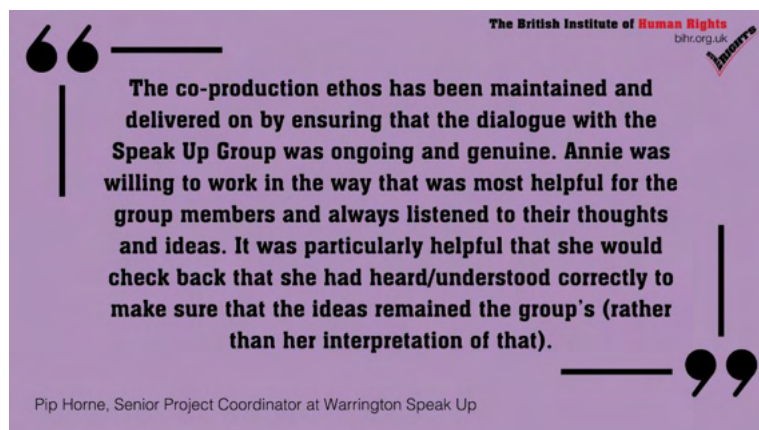
The group of self-advocates at Warrington Speak Up gained an increased knowledge of human rights and the confidence to use them. In addition, a meaningful co-production process was key to developing the human rights “solution”.

For the launch video, we asked the self-advocates to speak about what it was like to be involved in this project:

What was it like to make the new postcards and images?



The staff at Warrington Speak Up who have supported the group and liaised with BIHR throughout the year-long project also shared their views on the process by which their identified human rights “solution” was developed:

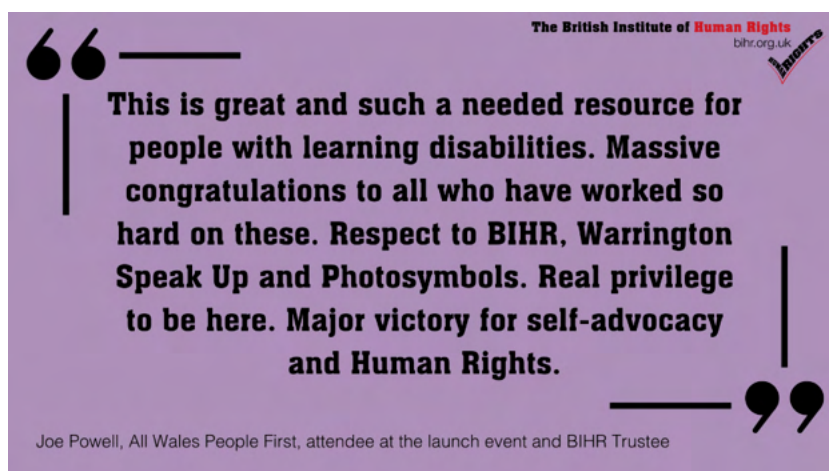


Evidently, the human rights postcards are achieving what they were created to achieve, which is to support people with a learning disability to understand and use their rights in conversation with the staff who support them. Plus, the process of being involved in co-developing this resource was one which the self-advocates and staff at Warrington Speak Up found meaningful, inspiring pride in creating something which others in a similar position will hopefully benefit from as well.

Wider groups

The new human rights postcards have been shared with self-advocacy groups across the country via email and on social media, and they have been encouraged to share this with their networks further.

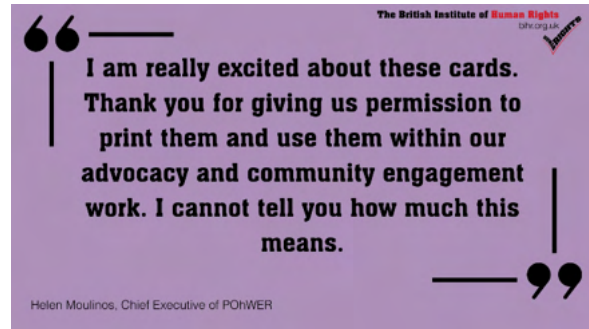
Nine self-advocacy groups from across England and Wales attended the launch event, where many attendees spoke positively about the resource.



200 physical copies of the postcards were printed. Between 17th May and 1st July 2022, 164 packs were posted to individuals and advocacy groups across all four nations.

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Individuals	81	0	12	2
Groups	36	32	9	0

Since the launch of the human rights postcards, we have heard from various individuals and groups about their usefulness in practice. Requests to print their own packs of postcards have come a local authority’s adult social care service, and from POhWER, a UK-based charity providing information, advice, support and advocacy to people who experience disability, vulnerability, distress and social exclusion. Additionally, [in BIHR’s policy work to protect the Human Rights Act](#) we were informed that Pembrokeshire People First were using the postcards in their Campaigns Group to understand the UK Government’s “bill of rights”, better known as a Rights Removal Bill, and give important feedback on [BIHR’s Easy Read guide to the Bill](#).



We do not yet know the full impact of these postcards, as they only launched relatively recently and are still being shared across the country. We also recognise that building knowledge and confidence to speak up for human rights may take time. Therefore, we intend to update this report in a few months in the hopes that people who have used the postcards for positive change will share how the resource has helped them or someone they support.

4. Goal and Next Steps

The goal of this project was to work alongside Warrington Speak Up to develop a human rights support “solution” for the people they support. The solution, a set of physical Easy Read postcards focusing on key rights that are relevant to people with a learning disability, was co-developed over a period of months, ensuring that the views of people who would be using the postcards was listened to throughout.

The self-advocates and staff at Warrington Speak Up have seen improved knowledge of human rights and confidence to use them, as well as a sense of pride at having been truly involved in the development of a resource which will hopefully support others to speak up for their rights.

Various avenues have been identified for sharing the postcards widely with key stakeholder groups, including with NHS trusts, care provider forums, and the voluntary sector. BIHR will be continuing to spread the word about this valuable resource over the coming months.

This has been a pilot project where BIHR has intended to enable groups to address the day-to-day issues where rights are risked, creating positive change within imperfect systems. We will be looking to re-run this programme with new partners to co-develop a human rights solution, whatever that might look like for them.


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It has been a privilege to work with you and BIHR on this project and to see in action such positive co-production throughout. Our self-advocates have loved being involved and to have their voice recognised within the process. We can already see the benefit of having such a resource within our own self-advocacy group. We're looking forward to hearing more stories from across the country on how the resources have supported individuals to understand their rights, to have their rights respected and to see how their lives have changed for the better!

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Mandy Taviner, Chief Executive at Warrington Speak Up

The British Institute of Human Rights
bihr.org.uk



Thank you to our core funders [Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust](#), the [Tudor Trust](#), and the [Bromley Trust](#), for making it possible for us to explore our work with communities, and helps us co-design support solutions that mean we can all make change through human rights, together.

