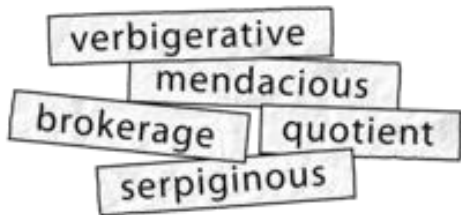


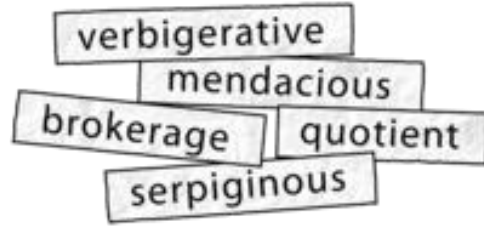
About the European Convention on Human Rights



Some of the words in this explainer can be confusing.



If a word is in **bold**, it means you can look it up in the 'hard words' section.



Hard words

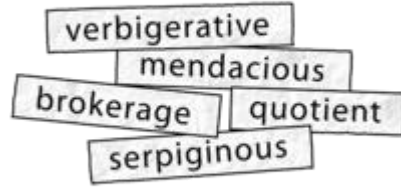
UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

ECHR: European Convention of Human Rights

ECtHR: European Court of Human Rights

DNACPR: Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.

A **DNACPR** notice means that if your heart stops, doctors will not try to restart it.



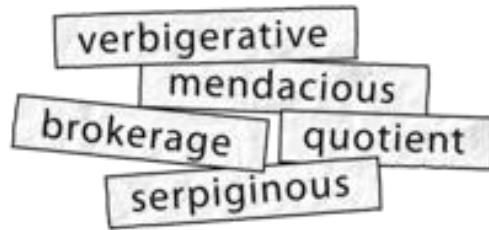
Hard words

LGBT: Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

Brexit: A mix of the words “Britain” and “exit” used to describe the UK leaving the European Union in 2020.

European Union: A group of countries in Europe who have agreed to work together.

The UK used to be a member but is not anymore.



Hard words

Council of Europe: An organisation made up of people from the countries that signed the ECHR.

Public body: An organisation or service provided on behalf of the government, like the NHS or local authorities.

What is the ECHR?



The European Convention on Human Rights (**ECHR**) is an agreement signed by 46 countries.



The UK is one of these countries.



The **ECHR** has a list of human rights that must be protected.

What is the ECHR?



People or other countries can bring legal cases against countries that don't protect human rights.



These cases are looked at by the European Court of Human Rights (**ECHR**).



There are 46 judges at the **ECHR** – one from each country that has signed the **ECHR**.

What is the ECHR?



The judges don't represent their countries – they are independent.

This means they can make a decision based on the law.

Where did the ECHR come from?



The **ECHR** was written after World War II in 1950.



Countries agreed that governments shouldn't say some people don't have human rights.

Everyone should have human rights.



The **ECHR** was started by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (**UDHR**).

Where did the ECHR come from?



The **UDHR** is an agreement but is **not** a law.

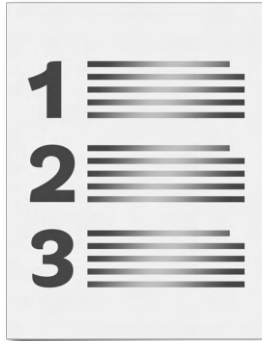


The **ECHR** is an agreement and a law.



This means people can ask courts to look at their case if their human rights aren't being protected.

What is in the ECHR?



The **ECHR** contains a list of the human rights that must be protected.

These are known as Articles.



The 16 rights in the UK's Human Rights Act come from the Articles in the ECHR.

You can [read about the Human Rights Act in our Easy Read explainer.](#)

What does the ECtHR deal with?



The **ECtHR** hears lots of different cases where people's human rights are at risk.

For example, it has heard cases about **LGBT** people's right to be in the army.

It has also heard cases about people being able to speak about their religion.

It has also heard cases about hospitals unfairly stopping people from leaving.

In real life: David's story



David was 12 years old and had severe learning disabilities.



He had a medical condition that made it hard to breathe.



He went to the hospital, where doctors gave him pain medicine.

In real life: David's story



David's mum didn't want him to have the pain medicine.



She thought it would make it even harder to breathe.

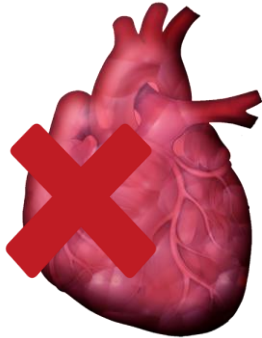
DNACPR



She also wanted doctors to promise they would not put a **DNACPR** on David's file.

In real life: David's story

DNACPR



DNACPR means do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

This means that if David's heart stopped, doctors would not try to start it. He could die.

The doctors put a **DNACPR** on David's file without telling his mum.

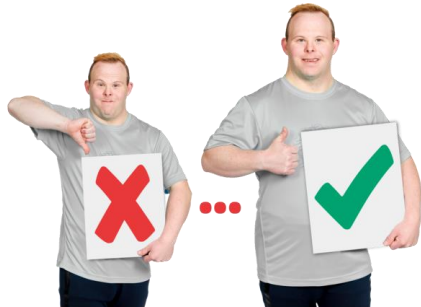
In real life: David's story



One day, David's family visited him in hospital and found he had got much worse.



They banged on his chest and rubbed his arms and legs to wake him up.



David's family was able to wake him up and he got much better.

In real life: David's story



David was able to go home.



David's mum took the hospital to court, saying they had broken hers and David's human right to private and family life.



The UK courts said they couldn't look at the case because it was already over.

In real life: David's story



David's mum then took her case to the **ECtHR**.

DNACPR



The **ECtHR** said the hospital should have asked a court before giving David pain medicine or putting a **DNACPR** on his file.



The **ECtHR** agreed that it was breaking David and his mum's human rights.

In real life: David's story



After David's case, the UK Department for Health updated their information for doctors.



This says doctors should only do something parents don't want in an emergency.



It also says hospitals should ask courts for advice as soon as possible if they disagree with parents.

Was the ECHR affected by Brexit?



The ECtHR was not affected by **Brexit**.

This is because **Brexit** was about leaving the **European Union**.

Even though the names sound similar, the **ECHR** has nothing to do with the **European Union**.

Was the ECHR affected by Brexit?



The **ECHR** is run by the **Council of Europe**, not the **European Union**.



The **European Union** deals mostly with things like trade and working conditions.



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The **Council of Europe** deals with human rights.

If we have the Human Rights Act, why do we need the ECHR?



You can only take a case to the **ECtHR** once you have tried all possible ways to have your human rights protected in the UK.



This could mean asking a **public body** to change its decision.



It could also mean taking a case to a UK court.

If we have the Human Rights Act, why do we need the ECHR?



If nothing in the UK has worked, then you can apply to take your case to the **ECtHR**.



This means that the **ECtHR** is sometimes the last chance to have your human rights protected.

If we have the Human Rights Act, why do we need the ECHR?



The **ECHR** also helps make sure different countries have the same rules about human rights.



If the UK was not in the **ECHR**, it could change what other countries think about the UK.



People in the UK might have less or different human rights protections than other countries.

What happens if a country doesn't protect the rights in the ECHR?



If the government or a public body doesn't look after your human rights, you can take them to court.

The Human Rights Act means you can take them to a court in the UK.

If this does not work, you might be able to take them to the **ECtHR**.

What happens if a country doesn't protect the rights in the ECHR?



The **ECtHR** cannot change UK laws.

Sometimes, a UK law might mean there's no way someone's human rights could have been protected.



The **ECtHR** might still order the Government to take certain actions or pay **damages**.

What happens if a country doesn't protect the rights in the ECHR?



The **ECHR** will also tell the Government that the law does not respect human rights.



The UK then has to decide how to protect people's human rights in the future.



It is up to [UK Parliament](#) to decide if and how to change the law.

What if UK courts disagree with the European Court of Human Rights?



The Supreme Court is the top court in the UK.



All other UK courts have to follow what the Supreme Court says.

What if UK courts disagree with the European Court of Human Rights?



All UK courts, including the Supreme Court, have to take into account what the **ECtHR** says in its judgments.

However, they don't have to follow it if they have a good reason not to.

What happens if the UK leaves the ECHR?



If the UK wasn't a member of the **ECHR**, people would not be able to bring cases against UK Governments to the **ECtHR**.



Leaving the ECHR might also break some of our other international agreements.



For example, the UK and the European Union share information about crime to keep everyone safe.

What happens if the UK leaves the ECHR?



The European Union could stop sharing information with us if we left the ECHR.

Are ECtHR judgments made public?



The **ECtHR** reports all of its judgments online.



It's free to read them.



Many of the judgements are available in different languages.