

REDUCING RESTRICTIVE PRACTICE USING HUMAN RIGHTS: PRACTICE LEADS PROGRAMME



Between April and July 2026, BIHR delivered a 5-part Practice Leads Programme to staff from inpatient units across the 4 key services commissioned by East of England Provider Collaborative. These interactive workshops were designed to enable staff to embed human rights into everyday decision-making across services.

BIHR gathered evaluation data from participants through anonymous online surveys (before, midway and after, with a 90-day follow-up survey to come), in-workshop polls, a reflective task, and direct verbal and written feedback. This report contains key quantitative, qualitative and reflective data to demonstrate the impact of this programme.

Key Impacts

REACH:

- 42 people completed the course, representing 5 NHS Trusts and 2 independent providers.
- Participants had diverse roles, including clinical staff, case managers, family ambassadors, and experts by experience.

PREVIOUS TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE:

- Only one third (33%) of participants had ever formally learned about the Human Rights Act (HRA) before.
- Less than half (43%) had relied on the HRA in their work before.

INCREASE IN KNOWLEDGE OF THE HRA: 2.9 > 3.5 > 4.1 out of 5



INCREASE IN CONFIDENCE TO APPLY THE HRA: 2.9 > 3.6 > 4 out of 5





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APPLYING LEARNING TO PRACTICE

- At the midway point, 59% of participants said the sessions had already made them think differently about a situation. 29% had raised a human rights point in a discussion or had shared their learning with colleagues after just two workshops.
- After the programme, participants said they were very likely (71%) or somewhat likely (29%) to rely on the HRA in their work.

92% of participants said they were more likely to take the following actions after the programme:

- Challenge or change practice decisions by feeling more confident and empowered to speak up
- Identify and respond to human rights risks by knowing about relevant rights and how they work in order to use them in decision-making
- Embed human rights into everyday practice by adding HRA prompts to policies and processes and explaining rights issues clearly

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

All participants were asked to complete a reflective task, applying their knowledge of the HRA to a real-life practice-based issue, policy, or process.

We plan to provide an analysis of themes identified across the reflective tasks, with individual case studies demonstrating the value of a human rights-based approach to reducing restrictive practice. For this interim report, we can share a number of broad themes that emerged:

- Blanket restrictions are a dominant issue in nearly every service type.
- Staff anxiety can be a maintaining factor in restrictive practice.
- The right to private and family life, home and correspondence (Article 8) was the most frequently mentioned right.
- Review is central to a human rights-based approach.
- Involving patients in conversations about restrictions could be improved.
- Wider systems issues can risk rights.

A common reflection that ran through this task was:

Is this restriction being applied because this person needs it, or because the organisation has become accustomed to it?





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FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

"Excellent programme, very well facilitated, I would not hesitate to recommend this to anyone in any sphere where Human Rights could be impacted."

"Really inspiring. I realise I still have a lot to learn but have been provided the foundations, resources and opportunities to continue learning."

"I thoroughly enjoyed this training which was thought provoking despite the complexity of the challenges and how to manage these I am more confident in doing so under this framework."

ADDITIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPORT

This autumn, participants can access a number of supportive peer reflection spaces facilitated by BIHR. These provide an informal space for staff to reflect, problem-solve and connect on rights-based issues emerging in their practice.

78% of participants said it would be useful for BIHR to provide additional support to them and their organisations to help embed human rights in the long term. Popular asks included:

- Building HRA confidence and knowledge for staff
- Support to develop or update rights-respecting policies, processes or forms
- Training or guidance for managers or senior leaders
- Access to tailored BIHR style resources

One word you would use to sum up your experience on this human rights practice leads programme?

