

BARING FOUNDATION COMMUNITY
PROGRAMME 2022-2025

CO-DESIGN A HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPORT SOLUTION 2024

Impact Report



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The British Institute
of Human Rights 

CONTENTS

00

Executive summary

Page 1

01

Programme context & aim

Page 2

02

What BIHR did

Page 3 - 11

03

Outcomes

Page 12 - 16

04

Goals

Page 17 - 18

05

Next steps

Page 19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This impact report relates to the co-design phase of BIHR's UK-wide Community Programme, funded by the Baring Foundation from 2022 to 2025. This phase involved partnering with four community and voluntary groups across the UK over six months in 2024 and co-creating practical human rights tools to support their work. This programme delivers on BIHR's Strategic Aim 2: Strengthening the agency of community and voluntary groups to use human rights advocacy in their everyday actions.



[Click here for more information about BIHR's UK-wide Community Programme.](#)

The work involved:

- An online programme launch event to open applications
- A rigorous shortlisting and selection process
- A full day 'Define' event in Birmingham to kick off planning
- A collaborative design process with face-to-face testing visits to partner organisations
- A resource launch event in the Houses of Parliament on Human Rights Day
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation

This report sets out BIHR's activities from May 2024 to January 2025. It brings together information gathered through direct correspondence, anonymous surveys and polls. Feedback primarily comes from the leads of the four partner organisations and their members, with additional input obtained at both launch events.

We concluded this programme having successfully co-developed four new and very different human rights support solutions which had been tailored to address the needs of each organisation. The feedback from community groups illustrates how BIHR's input has improved their confidence to use their knowledge of the Human Rights Act in their advocacy. The organisations reported positive experiences of this programme and feel they can build on this going forward, with suggestions for BIHR to provide more intensive support in the future.

PROGRAMME CONTEXT & AIM

BIHR's UK-wide Community Programme is funded from 2022 to 2025 by the Baring Foundation. It aims to strengthen the agency and voice of community and voluntary groups to tackle social injustice using human rights, aligning with BIHR's Strategic Aim 2: Supporting Communities. In this phase of the programme BIHR seeks to build partnerships with a small number of organisations to co-design a human rights support solution. This is an advocacy tool tailored to each organisation which uses the Human Rights Act to support and strengthen their work.

This is the third time that BIHR's offer to co-design a human rights tool has been available to community groups across the UK, and will be the final time in this funding cycle. BIHR's co-design offer is guided by a four-part model:

1. **Discover**
2. **Define**
3. **Develop**
4. **Deliver**

This work took place between May 2024 and January 2025. By working collaboratively over a few months with a range of community groups spanning a large geographical area and a range of pressing issues, BIHR aims to build the knowledge, confidence and resilience of people who work in and are supported by the organisations, helping them to embed Human Rights Act advocacy into their work in a practical, relevant and accessible way. We hope this ultimately leads to improved access to human rights and positive change.

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“The people that we support are vulnerable and struggle to get suitable support. The UK's Human Rights Act is essential in providing more evidence that they have rights that should be met.” Anonymous, Define event survey

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WHAT BIHR DID

The process of co-designing a human rights support solution with community groups follows a clear four-part model: Discover, Define, Develop, Deliver. Underpinning the four stages is continuous monitoring of the impact and effectiveness of BIHR's support.

0. Evaluation

Learning and data collection is central to this programme. Our approach to the co-design phase in 2024 builds on learning from previous cycles captured through direct feedback from community groups and internal BIHR reflection.

Heading into our 2024 co-design programme, BIHR decided to focus efforts on a smaller number of community groups than in the previous year, explore more face-to-face opportunities for collaboration, and broaden the possibilities for creating different types of support solutions compared with traditional guides.

To help BIHR understand the difference this type of human rights support can make for community groups involved in this year's programme, we sought input from the partner organisations to shape our activities and evaluate our approach. Understanding the long term impact of the human rights support solutions is ongoing at the time of writing this report and will continue until programme end in April 2025. Data is captured through various methods:

- Anonymous online surveys
- Anonymous workshop polls
- Check-in calls with the programme lead at midway point and post-launch event
- Email testimonials

1. Discover

Our work began with a free 60-minute online launch event on how BIHR supports community groups to take a human rights-based approach. This took place on 22 May 2024, and marked the opening of applications over a four-week period. In the session, participants heard about how the Human Rights Act can be a powerful tool in their advocacy work, with guest speakers from [Families in Trauma and Recovery](#) and [My Life My Choice](#) sharing their experience of working with BIHR on this programme in 2023. We also set out the commitment needed to meaningfully co-produce a human rights support solution, as well as how organisations could apply.

The launch event was attended by 47 people from across England, Scotland and Wales.

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“From birth to death, human rights are our lifetime rights and nobody, not even governments can tell us that we have no rights. Human rights are also about dignity and respect for all and creating safe spaces for us to live freely.” Anonymous, launch event follow up survey

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100%
of survey respondents said they thought the HRA could support community groups.

Community and voluntary groups were invited to submit their application via a Google Form, with an Easy Read version available on request. BIHR received 18 applications who were then shortlisted against clear eligibility criteria. Factors that were considered as part of a fair decision-making process included:

- Annual turnover – this programme prioritises organisations with an annual turnover of less than £750k.
- Feasibility of the ideas proposed
- Reach
- Capacity for and commitment to partnership working
- A mix of issues, types of organisation, audiences, and geographical spread

We received applications from community groups based in all four UK nations, and working across a range of issues including migration and asylum support, self-advocacy, health and disability, recovery from substance use, and young people. Half of the applications came from organisations supporting refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, possibly indicating a high need for human rights-based support in this sector.

Based on the above criteria, four organisations were selected:

African Women Empowerment Forum (AWEF) – a refugee-led organisation based in Nottingham which works to empower African women in the UK, primarily refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. They provide a platform for social interaction, integration, and skill development through a variety of programmes, and strive to create an environment where African women can thrive.

Cwm Taf People First – a self-advocacy charity in South Wales that supports people with learning disabilities to be involved in co-producing, co-designing and co-evaluating health and social care services in order for them to have voice, choice and control over their lives.

Northern Ireland Refugees and Asylum Seekers Women Association (Bomoko NI) – an organisation based in Belfast created by and for refugees and asylum seekers. They offer a welcoming space for women to connect, support each other and build community life by providing training opportunities, running family outings, and giving advice and advocacy support to its members.

The Parent and Carer Alliance – a community interest company supporting families whose children have additional needs and disabilities living in Gloucestershire. Their work is about ensuring those families are recognised, supported with opportunities, have a voice in the decision-making processes which affect their lives, and are empowered to be effective advocates in their interactions with health, social care, and education services.

2. Define

Online Human Rights Act Workshop

This year, we began our partnership with the four community groups by inviting them to a half day interactive online workshop, providing an overview of how the Human Rights Act works as a law and can be used by ordinary people to speak up in conversations with public services. The workshop took place on 17 July 2024 and was attended by 19 people across the four partner organisations, including staff, volunteers and members who would be involved in the development of a human rights support solution. Offering an introductory workshop incorporates learning from previous years, recognising that the people involved in the co-production process needed to feel more confident in their understanding of the Human Rights Act in order to develop their ideas about what they needed to practically support their work.

Define Workshop

The co-design programme has always started with a workshop to bring together the selected community groups, introduce the programme, get to know some of the issues the groups are facing, and listen to ideas for addressing them using human rights. This year was no different, however an important shift this year was the ability to hold this event in person. This incorporated learning from previous iterations of this programme that relationship-building and expectation-setting are key to successful co-production, and creating opportunities to meet in person is a valuable part of the process. BIHR and the four community groups travelled to Birmingham for a full day event on 24 July 2024, providing more space for informal connections and in-depth discussions in small groups.



BIHR used the Define Workshop to set out expectations and timelines to support effective planning, to share resources from previous years and encourage creativity, and to initiate conversations about what issues the organisations wanted to address, what content was needed, and what format and design the support solution could take in order to be most effective.

The community groups were asked to come up with a solution statement to help decide what their human rights support solution would look like. A support solution uses the following template:

As a... [who will use it?]

I need... [what is the content?]

So that... [what will it help with?]

Following the workshop, the groups were supported by the BIHR team to develop a clear idea of what they needed and a plan of how we would bring together their expertise in the social injustices arising in their community work and BIHR's expertise in the Human Rights Act to co-produce an effective advocacy tool.

Accessibility was a consideration from the planning stage onwards with regards to both the people involved in creating the human rights support solutions and their target audiences. All groups were asked to complete a 'Working Together Agreement' where they were asked how they work best, allowing BIHR to consider what reasonable adjustments could be made. For example, the plan developed with Cwm Taf People First was in Easy Read format to enable those involved in the process to participate from the beginning.

Develop

The development phase is the longest part of the co-design process, taking place from August to December. This involved:

- Regular online check-in meetings
- BIHR creating a solution plan containing joint decisions on audience, content, format, design, and how the support solution will reach people once completed
- BIHR developing the first draft of content and a sample design, with input from community groups
- Testing with community groups, allowing BIHR to create the final draft

The support solutions brought to BIHR by our 2024 community partners were more varied in format compared with previous years, including:

- **AWEF:** A booklet to raise awareness of the Human Rights Act for women refugees, migrants and asylum seekers from African and ethnic minority communities living in the UK. The booklet would explore five rights in relation to discrimination, migration status, treatment in asylum accommodation, and treatment by police and health services. The booklet would contain stories from AWEF members as well as steps to help readers identify and raise human rights concerns.
- **Bomoko NI:** A pocket-sized folded leaflet for asylum seeker and refugee families in Northern Ireland focusing on how the Human Rights Act can be used to challenge unfair decisions relating to housing. Bomoko NI's members experience difficulties in this area, and wanted a concise physical resource with information about two key rights, real-life stories showing how the rights apply, and tips for how to raise a human rights issue.
- **Cwm Taf People First:** A human rights card game for people with learning disabilities. The game takes real life stories provided by Cwm Taf People First's members and taken from BIHR's wider work, with the aim of the game being for players to decide which human rights apply to each story. The stories, game instructions and rights cards would be in Easy Read format to help people to understand and take part in the game.
- **The Parent and Carer Alliance:** A detailed but easy-to-use guide exploring the legal duties that officials in health, care, education and local councils have under the Human Rights Act, with a focus on wellbeing, choice, family and community connection, dignity and non-discrimination. This would include practical tools to help readers advocate for human rights, including template letters and signposting for more support.

Testing Visits

In 2024, we continued the theme of increasing face-to-face interaction on this programme by offering each community group a visit from their BIHR contact at a point in the process when it would be most helpful for them. Every organisation accepted this offer and all of them decided that a visit should take place once the first draft had been created to test it with their members as part of a meaningful co-production process.



BIHR was keen to listen and learn from the expertise of the partner community groups, ensuring that the human rights support solution could be an effective tool in enabling people to know and claim their rights in the situations they are facing. Below is some key feedback BIHR received and actioned to create the final drafts:

You said



We did

AWEF were keen to have the resource translated into different languages so that it was accessible to as many people as possible in their community. As well as English, they asked for the resource to be translated to Arabic.

We reached out to a translation organisation to translate the resource, so we were able to provide an Arabic version of the human rights resource. This means that more members of the community can access this information.

You said



We did

Bomoko NI asked for two sizes of their folded guides - a larger version containing real life stories from their members, and a smaller pocket-sized version which did not include the stories but allowed users to scan a QR code with their phones to access a detailed digital guide. The larger printed version with stories was important to Bomoko NI because some of their members do not have access to smartphones and needed all the key information in print.

We had planned on creating only one size of the resource but understood that it was important for Bomoko NI's members to have different options that would allow a range of people to access key information about their human rights. We created two versions of printed guides, and added QR codes to both guides where people could find more information.

You said



We did

Cwm Taf People First told us “To simplify the game the members feel that if the 5 rights could be set out on the table and take article and then each of the player is given 5 counters then when the case studies are read out they can each decide which right to put their counter. This then generates a discussion, and points are awarded to the player who has chosen the most appropriate answer.”

We originally had designed the game so that people had the rights cards in their hands and the stories on the table, but we took these suggestions and changed the rules of the human rights game so that it worked better for Cwm Taf People First. The results were great, with members of Cwm Taf People First saying they much preferred the new version of the game and found it much easier to understand.

You said



We did

The guide created with the Parent and Carer Alliance contained letter templates to help their members with raising a human rights issue. In testing the draft, they asked for the letters to be a downloadable document so that people reading the guide could edit the templates more easily.

We understood that it was important for the Parent and Carer Alliance that this guide was as practical as possible, and changing the format of the letter templates would make them more accessible and practical to busy parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

OUTCOMES: DEFINE

The support solutions

The final digital versions of all four human rights support solutions were published on the BIHR website on 10 December, which marks Human Rights Day.

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“This guide sets out some of the everyday situations that we see and provides a route map for families to be able to protect themselves. So often as a parent carer I would advocate for my child but not feel able to articulate the impact of the negative decision making on my other children. I believe that for many families using this guide, it demonstrates how everyone within the household is affected and we hope, as a result, keeps families together.” Lucy Fullard, Parent and Carer Alliance

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“The human rights pocket guide we've developed is far more than a manual—it's a practical resource designed for refugees, asylum seekers, and their advocates to navigate everyday challenges. It translates complex legal principles into clear, actionable insights, enabling individuals to understand and advocate for their housing rights effectively.” Mimi Unamoyo, Bomoko NI

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Each community group was assigned an equal budget to enable them to determine themselves how best to make sure the solutions to reach their intended audience. This included:

AWEF: Arabic translation and printing of the brochure.

Bomoko NI: Arabic and Somali translation, printing of the larger leaflet, and a local launch event.

Cwm Taf People First: Printing the card game, postage and packaging, and a local launch event.

Parent and Carer Alliance: Printing the guide, postage and packaging, and a local launch event.

In order to understand the long term impact of the co-designed human rights support solutions, BIHR intends to keep in touch with all four community groups to find out how this is making a difference to their work, and to the lives of people they support every day.

Launch event

BIHR hosted an event in London on 10 December which brought together the four community groups to share their human rights support solutions. This took place in the House of Lords, with guests from BIHR's wider work, civil society, and UK government.

This event was highly anticipated by the community groups, with much excitement about being able to speak to people in positions of government power about themselves, their work, and why the Human Rights Act matters to them.

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“Today we went to the Houses of Parliament and... I did my speech on the Human Rights and what is important for people with disability out there. Don't be a stranger and feel free to speak out about how you feel about your disability because I know for me there are some things I can't do with my hand but I did my speech today and I did my speech really really well. I am proud that I had the chance to do this and that people really listened to what we had to say. It is important we get to do more things like this in the future and that people with disabilities are included.” Harriet, Cwm Taf People First

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Attendees at the event also shared with BIHR how valuable it was for them to hear directly from the partner organisations who had worked on the human right support solutions speaking about their experiences:

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What did you enjoy most?
“Hearing from each of the speakers and being inspired about what is happening in communities across the country.” Anonymous, Human Rights Day survey

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“It was great to attend the BIHR Human Rights Day event in parliament and hear how important the Human Rights Act is for grass roots organisations and community activists who campaigning on issues that are impacting their communities.” - Allan Hogarth, Head of Government & Political Relations, Amnesty International UK

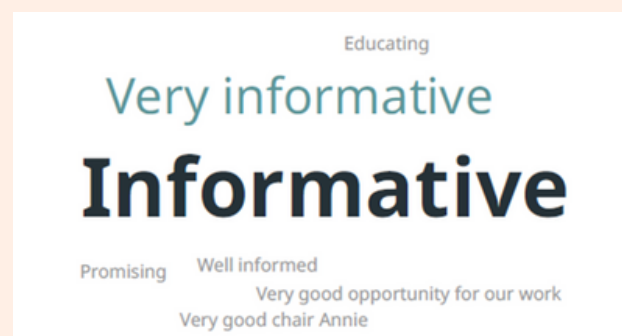
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The process

From delivering this phase of the programme in previous years, we know that the experience of co-designing a human rights support solution can be an impactful experience in itself. From beginning to end, the community groups are supported by BIHR to learn more about their legal rights protected by the Human Rights Act, they are listened to about the issues affecting their lives, and they end with a tangible resource that has been steered by them.

Members of the community groups who attended the introductory workshop at the beginning of the programme showed an **increase in their knowledge of the Human Rights Act from 3.9/5 to 4.3/5**, helping them to meaningfully take part in the development of their human rights support solution over the rest of the programme.

What one word would you use to describe today's workshop?



The groups told BIHR that they enjoyed coming together for the Define workshop in Birmingham to meet BIHR and the other organisations in person and begin thinking about possibilities for what they could create.

What has been your favourite thing about today?

- Exploring the possibilities and reigniting our passion to make a difference and empower our members
- How the solution is coming together and networking with the different community groups in the room
- Everything! Thank you for the opportunity, we are extremely grateful.
- Coming together for a worthy cause!

— “

“I found the BIHR staff very welcoming, interested in my work and what it aims to achieve, and supporting of turning those aims into a reality. The information was useful – especially knowing what had been done before but being encouraged to focus on what could work best for our work. The other groups were also inspiring.” Anonymous, Define workshop survey

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Finally, a key impact of the co-design programme was how the community groups had improved their understanding of why the Human Rights Act matters in their work. Some told us that the co-design programme was a great place for them to begin a wider campaign for human rights-respecting decisions in their interactions with public bodies and that this has already opened up new opportunities to advance their advocacy work, with some complexities still to unpick and aspirations to build on BIHR’s input going forward.

100%

of final survey respondents said they were more likely to rely on the HRA to make positive changes in life or work by challenging decisions about someone’s access to services and by working with public officials to more effectively support people’s human rights.

— “

“Human Rights and the Human Rights Act has now become part of our daily conversation in work and with our service users and therefore we want to make it a more integral part of what we do.” Anonymous, final survey

— ”

One community group told us they felt more conflicted about the Human Rights Act since they began this programme, adding that they felt “more conflicted but in a positive way – it has helped me to think about the different rights/articles in greater detail but by doing so this has also uncovered more questions, discussions and debate about whether it goes far enough.”
(Anonymous, final survey)

— “

“We have loved being involved in the programme and want to thank you for allowing us to be part of it. Working alongside BIHR has also given us credibility amongst some of our other funders and has opened up potential new avenues for future funding. The programme has also cemented Human Rights into our everyday work and conversations with our service users and has given them a new language in which to process things that have happened to them and to express how that made them feel. Using this lived experience has then allowed us to start to explore how we can campaign for change in the future.”
Anonymous, final survey

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GOALS

Through this programme, BIHR hopes to strengthen the agency and voice of community and voluntary groups to tackle social injustice using human rights. The evidence in this report indicates that thanks to BIHR's support the community groups are feeling more confident in their knowledge of the Human Rights Act and are taking steps in their own ways to embed this in their advocacy work.

At the time of writing this report, it is difficult to determine the full long-term impact of the human rights support solutions on individuals who will be using them, and BIHR intends to monitor this impact as we approach the end of this programme and beyond.

As for BIHR's learning from previous years, we were able to offer more face-to-face opportunities for collaboration which was pointed out by some of the community groups as being what they enjoyed the most about this programme. In addition, BIHR was able to deliver a range of creative co-developed solutions, including an interactive card game and a folded leaflet, tailored to meet the individual needs of each partner organisation.

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“Working with the BIHR on our Human Rights solution has been a very successful process and has resulted in a fantastic new resource for our families with disabled children. This project will make a huge difference and the impact of the work that has been achieved will help so many more families in the future. We hope to build on what we have achieved together. Thank you, for your excellent guidance and support, throughout.”
Parent and Carer Alliance

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“We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with the BIHR on this important project addressing housing and human rights for refugees and asylum seekers. This initiative has been invaluable in empowering our members with essential knowledge and support in navigating their rights and housing challenges. Feedback from our members has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants expressing appreciation for the program’s relevance and impact. Many found the program insightful and empowering, highlighting the importance of continued efforts in this area.” Bomoko NI

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“Our work on this project has opened up other avenues for us to explore, and in light of this no ask was too big (or strange) for the BIHR team. They really held our members interests at heart and worked with us to make sure that they were included in the process and that their voice was at the centre of our Game. This has allowed our members to see themselves within the final resource, generating a sense of pride; motivation to want to do more; and eagerness to share our work. We believe that the co-design project has generated a great foundation for us to champion human rights better in the future and to ensure that people with learning disabilities are not forgotten, overlooked or de-valued when accessing and interacting with public services.” Cwm Taf People First

— ”

It is noteworthy that some of the community groups told us that whilst they enjoyed the process and the end result, they would have appreciated having more time with BIHR to explore the issues they face and develop their human rights support solutions further. BIHR recognises some of the limitations of this programme in its current format, and will take this feedback into account when considering how we support community groups in the future.

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“This was an incredible opportunity and working with the BIHR team has been really insightful and useful – we have learnt a LOT! however, the timings of the co-design process felt a little rushed and whilst we love our resource we feel it is really the tip of the iceberg and we would love to develop it further and test it more rigorously to ensure it is as effective as possible for the end users.” Anonymous, final survey

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NEXT STEPS

This was the final co-design cycle on BIHR's UK Communities Programme which concludes in spring 2025. BIHR will continue our work supporting communities beyond this programme and we are exploring how we will do this going forward.

All the 2024 co-designed human rights support solutions are available for download on the BIHR website:



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