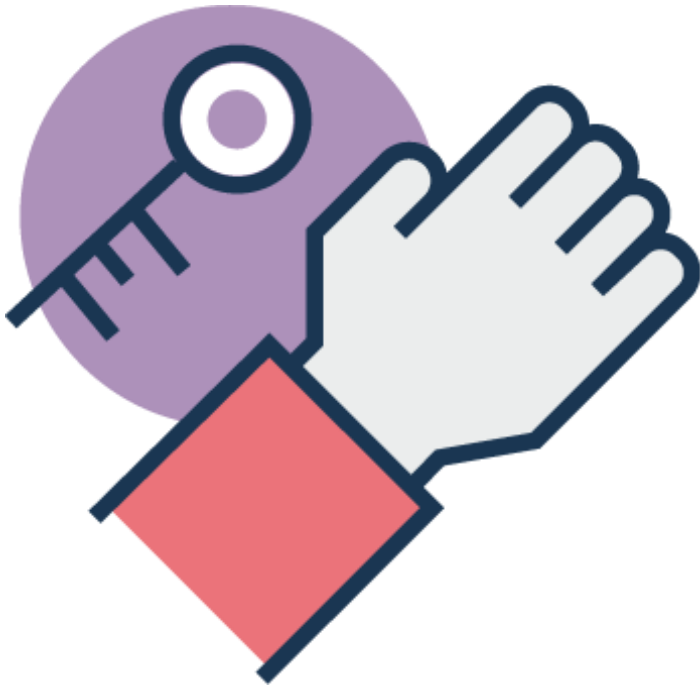


The Right to be Free from Serious Harm



Article 3 of the Human Rights Act

The right to be free from serious harm is one of the 16 human rights (also called Articles) in the Human Rights Act.

The full name for this right is the Right to be Free from Torture and Inhuman and Degrading Treatment.

When could the Right to be Free from Serious Harm matter to me?



When you experience abuse or neglect.



When you are not getting the type of support you need and this puts you at risk of serious harm.



If the police (or other public service) do not properly investigate behaviour that puts you at risk of serious harm.



Because we are all different, what is serious harm might be different for each person. It is all about the impact the treatment has on you.



The right to be free from serious harm is an absolute right. This means staff working in public services cannot treat you in a way that puts you at risk of serious harm.

What do staff have to do about my right to life?



They have to **RESPECT** your right.

This means that staff in public services can never put you at risk of serious harm.



They have to **PROTECT** your right.

They should protect you when they know (or should know) that someone is at risk of serious harm. This includes doing something when someone is known to be at risk of serious harm from another person such as a family member or carer.



To **FULFIL** your right.

This means investigating when public officials may have been involved in putting someone at risk of serious harm or treating them in a way which causes serious harm.

Susan's Story



Susan was a woman with learning disabilities. She had a fall and was taken into hospital.



Susan had a doll which she loved and took it with her into hospital. Susan's family found the doll on the floor of the hospital broken.



Susan was very upset because her doll was very important to her. It being broken really hurt Susan's mental health. Susan's family believed the doll was damaged deliberately to punish Susan for not doing as she was told.



The hospital offered to replace the doll, but they would not apologise and would not investigate what had happened. Susan's family contacted lawyers who helped her argue that her treatment was inhuman and degrading.



This was settled out of court and the hospital made a financial award to enable Susan to move out of the hospital and help her continue her life. The hospital also agreed to investigate the incident to make sure it did not happen to anybody else.

Article 3- Right to be free from inhuman or degrading treatment



You can watch a video of Susan's Story on Youtube. [Click here.](#)