

IMPACT REPORT: Embedding human rights legal duties in the delivery of mental health care

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Over three workshops in March and April 2025, this open course explored how the Human Rights Act (HRA) can be used as a tool to navigate complex decision-making when working with people in inpatient mental health settings where the Mental Health Act can apply. This included:

- ✓ A detailed overview of the HRA legal framework.
- ✓ Five relevant rights in mental health care, explored through a range of practice-based and legal real-life stories.
- ✓ Testimonies from a lived experience expert and a former human rights lead in an NHS mental health trust.
- ✓ Practical tools of FAIR and PANEL to assist with embedding a human rights-based approach to everyday practice.

Capturing the impact

BIHR is committed to evaluating our work to understand its impact and to improve it going forward.

Course participants were invited to complete anonymous surveys before, midway and after the workshops. In the workshops, we also ran anonymous polls using Slido and monitored the chat for participant feedback. **A summary of this information can be found in this short report.**

Before the first workshop, only 59% of participants said they were supportive of the HRA. However, **by the final workshop 100% said they were supportive of the HRA.**

“I now feel more positive about [the Human Rights Act] because I have a clearer understanding of how to use it effectively. The programme has equipped me with the tools and knowledge to apply the Act in a way that can truly support and protect the rights of individuals, and that has made me more confident in advocating for human rights.”
- Anonymous Survey Response

Throughout the workshops, participants reported **improvements to their knowledge of the HRA** and the legal duties and rights it brings into UK law, as well as to their **confidence to apply their learning** in their day-to-day decision-making.

Understanding of the Human Rights Act



Confidence using the Human Rights Act



In the final workshop, **participants considered the steps they could take** in their work to embed their learning and support the rights-respecting application of mental health law. Some of the actions identified included:

-  Exploring further human rights training for staff
-  Creating and sharing resources to help people accessing mental health services to understand and claim their rights
-  Working closely with advocates
-  Creating human rights champions
-  Sharing their learning with colleagues
-  Developing a quality improvement project

“Human rights is not scary, embrace it.”

- Anonymous Slido Response

The first workshop was **co-delivered with a lived experience expert**, and 73% of participants said this was really important to their learning. Survey responses from this workshop included that it was “really useful to our role” and “made me think about my practice”.

“I just want to say that it was a fantastic workshop. I now have a much clearer understanding of the Human Rights Act and feel more equipped to apply its principles effectively to support my members. The programme has been incredibly valuable in enhancing my knowledge and skills, and I’m confident that I can use what I’ve learned to make a real difference. Thank you for such an insightful and empowering experience.”

- Anonymous Survey Response

88%

88% rated the final workshop good or excellent.

As demonstrated above, **the feedback on this open course was largely positive however we have taken some learning** from participant feedback. Some found the mix of organisations difficult in small group discussions, and similarly some felt that the variety of scenario-based activities were not always relevant to their work. We also received some comments about the workshops moving too quickly.

BIHR Human Rights Programmes

When participants were asked what influences how they feel about the HRA, the most common answer (47%) was ‘my work / employers prioritise knowing about human rights’.

Alongside our open courses which bring several organisations together, we provide bespoke human rights support to public bodies and services to upskill staff on human rights law and provide practical tools to help them make rights-respecting decisions and embed a culture of respect for human rights across organisations.

A human rights programme for an individual organisation allows for workshop content tailored to specific issues and staff groups, a greater range of learning support, and longer-term partnerships to monitor and adapt our approach to enable a positive impact.



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