

# SECURING UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS: OUR FIVE YEAR STRATEGY FOR EVERYDAY JUSTICE

CONNECT

CREATE

CHALLENGE

CHANGE

CHAMPION



BIHR and Community Partners  
in the UK Parliament



# Introduction

**As the UK’s dedicated Human Rights Act (HRA) practice and policy charity, our purpose is clear: to ensure the universal rights set out in the HRA protect and secure dignity, fairness, and everyday justice. This is BIHR’s 2026–2031 Strategy to make that happen. In this Strategy you will find:**

|                                                                    |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <u>Welcome from BIHR’s Chair, Imran Khan KC.....</u>               | 3  |
| <u>Meeting the Moment with Purpose &amp; Hope, BIHR’s CEO.....</u> | 4  |
| <u>How We Work.....</u>                                            | 5  |
| <u>The Context: A Critical Five Years Ahead.....</u>               | 6  |
| <u>Our Human Rights Act: A Framework for Everyday Justice.....</u> | 7  |
| <u>Why BIHR is Needed.....</u>                                     | 8  |
| <u>Our Impact: Changing Lives.....</u>                             | 9  |
| <u>Our Impact: Changing Systems.....</u>                           | 10 |
| <u>Our Values.....</u>                                             | 11 |
| <u>Our Vision &amp; Mission.....</u>                               | 12 |
| <u>What We Do &amp; What We Don’t.....</u>                         | 13 |
| <u>Genuinely UK-wide.....</u>                                      | 14 |
| <u>Rights Holders and Duty Bearers.....</u>                        | 15 |
| <u>Our 5 Key Areas.....</u>                                        | 16 |
| <u>Our Strategic Aims for 2026 – 2031.....</u>                     | 17 |
| <u>How We Make Change Happen (Model).....</u>                      | 19 |
| <u>The 2031 We Want to Build &amp; Keep Connected.....</u>         | 20 |



“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home, so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

Eleanor Roosevelt, Chairperson of the UN Commission that wrote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948



# Welcome from BIHR's Chair: Imran Khan KC

As we launch BIHR's Strategy for 2026–2031, we do so at a moment of profound consequence for human rights in the United Kingdom. The Human Rights Act and the European Convention on Human Rights – the framework to safeguard dignity, fairness, equality and justice for a generation – are now increasingly framed as expendable in political debates. These narratives are not accidental; they are part of a steady shift that risks eroding universal protections through misrepresentation and misunderstanding, rather than informed public dialogue.

At BIHR, we know – from decades of work with people, public bodies, and civil society – that the Human Rights Act is not an abstract symbol. It is an essential, practical tool that helps families challenge unlawful restrictions, empowers communities to resist unfair policies, and enables individuals to secure dignity in the everyday interactions that shape their lives. These are not hypothetical benefits; they are real changes that happen when public bodies understand and fulfil their legal duties, and when people know the rights they hold.

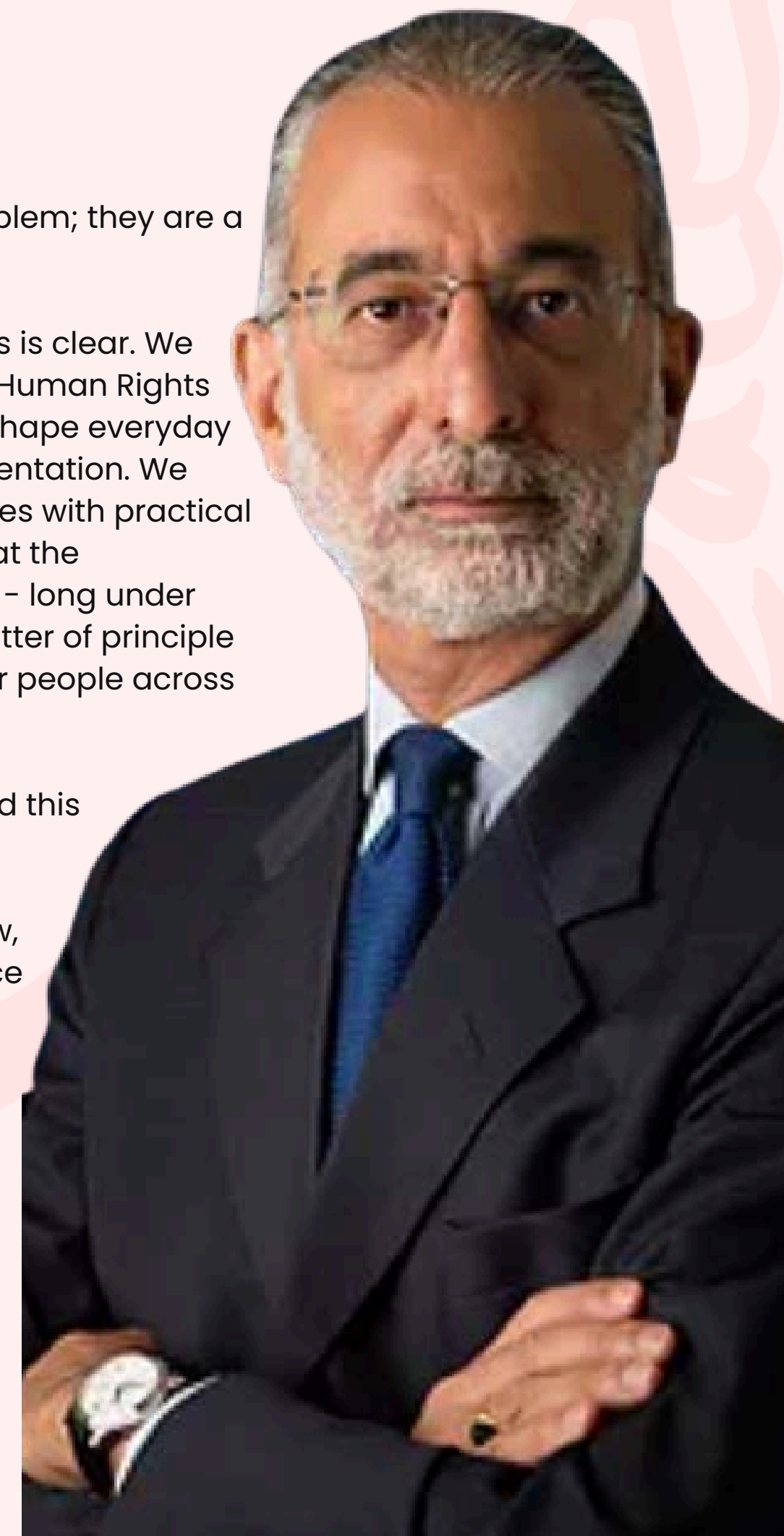
The danger we face is not that the Human Rights Act has failed; it is that its full potential has never been embedded. Political rhetoric too often casts human rights as obstacles rather than safeguards. In doing so, it distracts from the real systemic pressures affecting public services and those who rely on them. But

human rights are not the problem; they are a core part of the solution.

Our task for the next five years is clear. We must secure and embed the Human Rights Act across the systems that shape everyday life through strategic implementation. We must challenge false narratives with practical truth. And we must ensure that the universalism of human rights – long under strain – is upheld not as a matter of principle alone, but as a lived reality for people across the UK.

BIHR is uniquely placed to lead this work. With this Strategy, we commit to doing exactly that, grounded in human rights law, experience-informed, evidence-based, collaboratively, proactively, resiliently, and sustainably.

*Imran Khan*





# Meeting the Moment With Purpose & Hope: BIHR's CEO, Sanchita Hosali

The next five years will test the future of everyday justice in the UK. The political landscape has shifted in ways that place the Human Rights Act and our wider rights framework under unprecedented strain. We are seeing a growing narrative that claims to defend human rights while simultaneously advancing proposals that weaken their practical force. This contradiction fuels division and obscures the real issue: it is failing systems – not human rights – that leave people without support, safety, or dignity.

At BIHR, our work across the UK, strategically implementing the Human Rights Act, makes this reality

unmistakable. Human rights are not abstract ideals. They are the everyday rulebook that ensures public bodies act lawfully; that people in crisis are not ignored; that systems are accountable; and that fairness and dignity guide decisions long before a courtroom is ever reached. Yet too often, the Human Rights Act is treated as a political symbol rather than the practical, workable framework it is; debated far more than it is understood.

This Strategy sets out how BIHR will meet this moment. We will deepen our work with communities, ensuring people have the knowledge, confidence, and tools to use their

rights in daily life. We will support public services to translate legal duties into real-world practice, building systems where human rights are integral, not incidental. And we will amplify authentic stories of lived experience – the real examples of decisions changed, rights upheld, and dignity restored. These stories matter. They cut through misrepresentation, offer hope, and show in concrete terms the difference the HRA makes. They ensure that those most directly affected by rights issues help shape the laws and policies that govern their lives.

BIHR's strength lies in our dual vantage point: working alongside grassroots communities while engaging inside systems, shaping policy and influencing national conversations. This means we bring real stories, real change,

and real evidence into spaces where decisions are made. We operate both inside and outside "the game".

Our vision is of a UK where human rights are real, embedded and delivering accountability in policy, in services, and in everyday life.

The work ahead is challenging, but it is also full of possibility, we can afford neither hesitation nor distractions. With this Strategy, we choose clarity and purposeful resolve: to protect the universal rights that allow dignity and justice to flourish, and to respond to real threats not with fear, but with determined, hopeful confidence in what these rights make possible when we chose to protect and embed them.

*Sanchita Hosali*



# How We Work

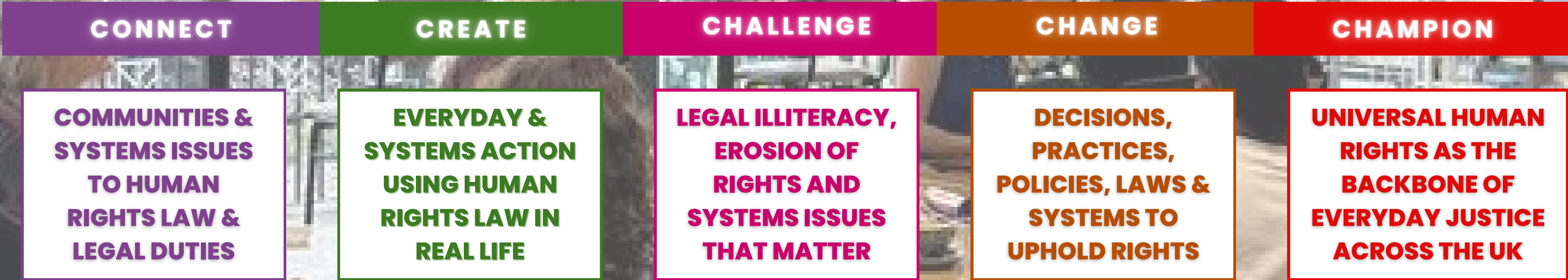
We exist to drive positive social change by embedding human rights into everyday life across the UK. As the UK’s dedicated Human Rights Act (HRA) practice and policy charity, we focus on harnessing the power of that law and its parent, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), ensuring they are actively applied and championed.

At BIHR, we equip civil society, communities, public bodies, and policymakers to integrate human rights into law, policy, and

services, enabling everyday justice and systems change. We are about ensuring the meaningful and tangible realisation of human rights in people’s daily lives.

Our community programmes are rooted in grassroots realities. We work directly with people and groups across the UK, including those historically marginalised or under-resourced, supporting them to use the Human Rights Act to address the issues affecting their daily lives.

We work both inside and outside traditional power structures: partnering with grassroots groups and communities to advance everyday justice, while also engaging directly with policymakers and public bodies. BIHR is distinct in bringing these two worlds together; we ground national policy and influencing work in real, everyday experience and practice-based insights from across the UK. **At BIHR we:**



# The Context: A Critical Five Years Ahead

The next five years will be a defining period for the UK, and universal human rights in particular. The Human Rights Act (HRA) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) remain vital safeguards of dignity, fairness, justice, and equality, but they are also increasingly pulled into political and ideological battles.

As we launch this Strategy, the social and political fault lines across the UK are deepening. Public service pressures, economic strain, and widening societal divisions are fuelling tensions about universal rights. People, communities, and civil society more broadly are stretched. They need practical support to advocate for the HRA/ECHR and integrate it into their services and influencing work to secure everyday dignity and justice. We also know that the people and services responsible for systems – who want to act lawfully and fairly – often feel worn down, constrained, and stuck.

Experience shows that one of the most effective ways to uphold the HRA and ECHR in the UK is to demonstrate how they work in everyday life – not only to warn of what could be lost. Through our programmes with communities and public bodies, we make rights real in decisions, policies, and services, and we carry those concrete outcomes into public and policy conversations. These authentic stories of change – a decision reconsidered, a policy improved, a person treated with dignity, a system shifting – are what moves hearts and minds. They are exactly what wider civil society needs to strengthen its own influencing work to secure our human rights. Past efforts to resist remove our human rights law have shown how evidence of impact builds legitimacy.

The task ahead is therefore twofold: to deepen the practical work that creates these real-world outcomes, and to tell those stories with accuracy,

authenticity, and hope – showing how human rights deliver fairness, accountability, and everyday justice across the UK.

This strategy will take us across the next General Election, during which the HRA and ECHR are likely to be a key battleground. Repeal of our HRA and withdrawal from the ECHR – and with them the protection of universal human rights for us all in the UK – are already openly discussed as mainstream political promises. Hostility that has built for years around migration is now insidiously creeping into political framing in other areas, particularly targeting disabled people, children with special educational needs and disabilities, and people living in poverty.

The universalism of human rights is needed more than ever. If we do not proactively champion, embed, and secure the HRA/ECHR, these universal protections risk being lost – not through a single moment, but through steady erosion. At BIHR, our expertise and experience tell us there is hope. There is still a window to act, to champion human rights, to shape a society that values dignity, and to ensure that the next five years do not diminish what has been hard-won. That window is open now, and now is the time for us to make the most of it.



# Our Human Rights Act: A framework for everyday justice

Twenty-five years since it came into force, the Human Rights Act (HRA) remains a powerful, legally binding framework for protecting dignity, fairness, justice, and equality across the UK. Yet its potential has not been fully realised, and too often it is portrayed as having failed or become inadequate — not simply by its critics but by others in the human rights space. This perception is largely driven by political misrepresentation, limited public understanding, and inconsistent application by public bodies.

In reality, frustration stems not from flaws in the law itself but from gaps in its implementation. Too often, political and policy debates treat the HRA as outdated, channelling energy into campaigning for “what’s next” rather than embedding and using the

framework we already have. This overlooks the transformative impact the HRA has when it is properly understood, applied, and integrated into everyday systems.

These gaps are rooted in a lack of knowledge, confidence, and practical support within civil society and public bodies to use the HRA effectively. When implemented well, the Act strengthens accountability, drives better decision-making, and improves services and outcomes across communities and sectors. BIHR’s strategy is grounded in reaffirming the strength of the HRA and making its protections real in people’s daily lives, ensuring the law is not only defended but actively and effectively implemented.



BIHR and Community Partners in the Belfast (Northern Ireland)

# Why BIHR is Needed

The Human Rights Act (HRA) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) provide essential legal protections in the UK, but their role in everyday life is often misunderstood, overlooked, or deliberately undermined. Political debates frequently misrepresent these laws, while public bodies and civil society organisations can lack the practical knowledge and confidence to use them effectively. At the same time, communities face real rights issues in education, health, welfare, care, and housing – areas where embedding human rights can transform experiences and outcomes.

Grassroots groups and communities need specialist support to use the HRA confidently and effectively, but the UK currently lacks a connected, resourced human rights infrastructure. BIHR acts as connective tissue across place, issue, and specific groups – helping to build a shared, universal approach to human rights that strengthens solidarity rather than creating silos.

BIHR occupies a unique and trusted space as the UK's dedicated HRA practice and policy charity, bridging the gap between law and lived experience. Our role is to make human rights real, usable, and defensible, to ensure the HRA is an enabler. We enable people and organisations to apply the law in daily life, to ensure the HRA is a practical tool for change. This in turn strengthens its public and political legitimacy, ensuring it remains a powerful means for justice and accountability.

Unlike groups focused solely on influencing within formal systems, or those working exclusively at the grassroots, BIHR bridges and connects these spaces. Our dual role means we can carry the reality of community experiences into policy debates, ensuring decisions are informed by lived experience and evidence from practice.

BIHR and Community Partners in  
Cwmbran (Wales)

enabling  
greatness  
even





# We Harness the HRA to Drive Everyday Justice with People

## **Sandeep: Keeping a home, together**

Sandeep, David and Sally had built a stable life in their supported home, surrounded by familiar routines and a community they trusted. When the council announced plans to move them elsewhere to cut costs, their sense of security collapsed. The proposed relocation would uproot the life they had shaped together. With support from an Independent Advocate trained by BIHR, they used the Human Rights Act to explain how the move risked breaching their Article 8 rights to home, private life and the relationships they relied on. Reframing the issue through human rights changed the conversation. The council withdrew the proposal, allowing the group to remain in the home that sustained their wellbeing.

## **Josh: Restored wellbeing on the ward**

For Josh, a young inpatient in a children's mental health hospital, his notebook was a lifeline; somewhere to express emotions and stay grounded. When staff removed it under a new blanket policy, Josh lost one of the few tools that helped him cope. His mum, recently trained by BIHR, questioned the decision using the Human Rights Act. She explained that this interfered with Josh's Article 8 right to private life and his Article 1 Protocol 1 right to his possessions. The challenge prompted staff to reconsider. They returned his notebook and replaced the blanket rule with a proportionate, child-focused approach. The HRA ensured Josh's emotional wellbeing was recognised and protected.

## **Yolande: Rebuilding life safely**

After months fleeing domestic abuse, Yolande and her children were living day-to-day, focused solely on staying safe. When Social Services assessed the situation, they misinterpreted her actions as instability and deemed the family "intentionally homeless," proposing to place the children in foster care. A frontline worker trained by BIHR recognised the risks and helped Yolande use the Human Rights Act to challenge the decision. They showed that removing the children would seriously interfere with their Article 8 right to family life and that the context – escaping violence – had been misunderstood. With the HRA reframing the case, Social Services reversed course, offered practical support and kept the family together while they rebuilt their lives.

## **Robert: Living an equal life**

For Robert, a disabled gay man, social connection was essential. While others receiving support were helped to visit pubs and clubs, his request to attend a gay pub – a space where he felt comfortable – was refused. The unequal treatment left him feeling singled out. His advocate, after BIHR training, recognised this as a human rights issue. Through the Human Rights Act, they argued that the refusal interfered with his Article 8 right to private life and could amount to discrimination under Article 14. Presented with this clear legal framework, the provider reversed the decision. Robert gained the support he needed, and the organisation strengthened its commitment to fair, rights-respecting practice.

## **Balbir: Dignity at home**

After a major stroke, Balbir could no longer access the upstairs of her council home. With no downstairs bathroom, she was told to strip-wash in the kitchen and use a commode in the living room, leaving her distressed and without privacy. An advocate trained by BIHR recognised the seriousness of her situation. Using the Human Rights Act, they highlighted concerns under Article 3's freedom from degrading treatment and Article 8's protection of dignity and private life. They also raised the impact on her ability to practise her religion, engaging Article 9. Once framed as a rights issue, the council reassessed her needs and agreed to build an accessible bathroom, restoring dignity and independence.

# We Harness the HRA to Drive Everyday Justice in Systems

## Embedding Human Rights in the Housing Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman Service wanted to strengthen how its staff recognised and applied human rights when handling complaints about social housing landlords. Having recently developed new internal guidance on the Human Rights Act and Equality Act, they partnered with BIHR to bring that guidance to life through practical, applied learning. BIHR began by mapping their work with key HOS staff and then co-designed a bespoke capacity-building programme tailored to the realities of Ombudsman casework. We developed and delivered a two-part programme to around 300 staff, building confidence in identifying and addressing human-rights issues in complaints. This was complimented by a deeper three-part learning-set series, exploring practical frameworks and rights-based approaches relevant to housing decisions. The programme strengthened not just individual knowledge but the organisation's wider culture, supporting HOS to embed a more consistent, transparent and rights-respecting approach across all stages of complaint handling.

## Bringing Human Rights into Everyday Practice Across the West Midlands

Across the West Midlands, practitioners supporting autistic people and people with learning disabilities faced difficult decisions in a pressured system. Many felt uncertain about how to uphold rights within restrictive cultures and limited resources. BIHR's partnership with West Midlands ADASS and NHS England Midlands brought practitioners together for a tailored programme on how to harness the duties in the HRA to support people's human rights. As staff explored how human rights applied to communication, consent, restrictions and crisis support, their confidence grew. They began reframing challenges through a rights lens, advocating more strongly and balancing safety with autonomy. Services reported that BIHR's approach didn't just change individual decisions, it shifted whole approaches. A shared human-rights foundation is shaping how practitioners plan, problem-solve and understand the people they support.

## Strengthening Legal Protections in Mental Health Care

The new Mental Health Act, passed in Dec 2025, marked a major milestone in reforming mental health care across England and Wales. BIHR played a key role in ensuring human rights and lived experience shaped the process - co-producing accessible explainers, supporting evidence submissions and making the reform easier to understand for people accessing and delivering services. A central achievement was securing Clause 51, which closes a loophole that had weakened protections for people whose mental-health aftercare was outsourced to private providers. Through advocacy with lived-experience experts, national charities and care providers, BIHR helped ensure that human-rights duties follow the person, no matter who delivers care. Lived-experience voices were also heard at the highest levels of scrutiny, with BIHR supporting a dedicated parliamentary roundtable that brought real stories directly to lawmakers. As implementation begins, BIHR continues to provide clear explainers, training and lived-experience-led programmes to help the new law lead to real change in practice.

## Defending the Human Rights Act from the Rights Removal Bill

When the then Government proposed replacing the Human Rights Act with a so-called "Bill of Rights," communities feared a loss of vital protections. BIHR responded with clear, accessible briefings and tools, turning technical legal changes into information everyone could understand. We mobilised lived-experience voices through the RITES Committee, ensuring real-world stories reached Parliament. During the House of Lords debate, Peers echoed BIHR's concerns and amplified those voices. After 2 and half years, the Government announced the Rights Removal Bill would not proceed - a major victory for rights, shaped by BIHR's evidence, storytelling and advocacy.



# What does experience tell us needs to happen next?

Over 25 years of practice-based work show that the future of the Human Rights Act is shaped not only in courts or Parliament, but in the everyday places where decisions are made and rights are lived. Our community partners have three clear asks, a blueprint for a resilient human rights infrastructure:

- 1 Resource Human Rights Act advocacy before crisis.** Invest in everyday HRA knowledge, confidence and capacity long before things go wrong. Communities who understand and use their rights are best placed to champion them. There must be a focus on equipping people with practical, accessible and accurate human rights support as standard.
- 2 Back everyday implementation that shifts systems.** Prioritise the systemic change – across law, policy, guidance, services and commissioning – that explicitly embeds the HRA at the heart of public decision-making. This must be matched with practical support: Easy Read workshops, co-produced guidance, reflective training and other hands-on interventions that make the law real. Lasting change needs both structural reform and direct practice support, delivered by experts who meet people where they are.
- 3 Amplify lived experience of using the HRA to make change.** Authentic stories of people using the HRA to secure dignity, fairness and everyday justice deepen understanding, counter misinformation and builds shared commitment to universal human rights. But these stories only exist when communities, public service staff and officials have the support they need to use the HRA in real time, not as an aspiration, but as a practical tool. That requires everyday implementation.

## Our Values

### GROUNDING IN HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

The Human Rights Act (HRA) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) are central to all our work, guiding our practical change work and our national advocacy and influencing.

### EXPERIENCE INFORMED

Lived and practitioner experience is key to our work; communities and civil society are active partners, not simply recipients or beneficiaries of our work.

### EXPERIENCE INFORMED

We combine legal expertise with authentic evidence and stories of human rights in practice to make the case for positive change that delivers everyday justice.

### COLLABORATIVE

We work across sectors, places, issues & networks, avoiding isolated approaches, sharing knowledge and resources.

### PROACTIVE & RESILIENT

We anticipate threats and opportunities to the HRA/ECHR and respond strategically.

### SUSTAINABLE

We prioritise organisational capacity, governance, and long-term funding to maintain impact.



# Our Vision

Our vision is of a society where human rights are embedded across everyday systems in national and local law, policy, and public services, enabling everyday justice for all.

**This means people, communities, and public bodies are empowered, connected, and resilient, using the Human Rights Act to drive systemic change and uphold universal protections. Within this, BIHR is the trusted authority championing the practical realisation of human rights in daily life and policy.**

# Our Mission

Our mission is to champion the Human Rights Act as a practical tool for everyday justice, helping civil society, communities, public bodies, and policymakers embed rights in law, policy, and services. Through expertise, evidence, experience, collaboration, we drive change for everyday justice.



BIHR and Community Partners meeting with UK Funders



# What We Do & What We Don't

**Our Strategic Implementation of the Human Rights Act with communities and public bodies, fills the long-standing gap between legal frameworks and real-world practice. This approach ensures that human rights law is not just defended but meaningfully enacted across systems.**

We don't go to court.

**WE WORK ON THE GROUND WITH COMMUNITIES, GROWING HUMAN RIGHTS OWNERSHIP.**

We don't give legal advice.

**WE BUILD PEOPLE'S CAPACITY AND CONFIDENCE TO USE HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY.**

We don't campaign for new laws without implementation.

**WE MAKE UK HUMAN RIGHTS LAW WORK, TAKING THE OFF THE PAGE INTO REAL-LIFE CHANGE.**

We do not provide individual legal advice, take on casework, or act as a campaigning organisation on single-issue agendas. Nor do we work exclusively with particular communities or thematic issues. This is because our purpose is to embed the Human Rights Act (HRA) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) across systems, with communities, rather than addressing isolated problems. By focusing on practical application, capacity-building, and systemic change, we maximise impact and avoid duplicating the work of legal representatives, advice services, or issue-specific campaign groups.

We do not seek to reinvent the wheel but to ensure the strong human rights framework we already have is put into practice. Too often, efforts move quickly to the next issue, overlooking the vital work of implementation — the “doing” that makes human rights real. Achieving change is not just about setting new agendas,

telling stories of potential, or waiting for violations to remedy. We need investment in the everyday work embedding human rights in practice and amplifying the stories of transformation already underway.

Our focus is on everyday systems – health, care, housing, welfare, and education – where the HRA can make a tangible difference in people's lives. By concentrating on these universal areas, we build solidarity and connect human rights to daily experiences, helping to shift hearts and minds. We do not directly focus on specific themes such as immigration, criminal justice, protest rights, or data and technology, where specialist expertise already exists. Via collaboration and relationships across the human rights and public law sectors means we share insights that strengthen those areas.

**Our independence and clear remit allow us to be a trusted source of expertise for rights holders and duty bearers, supporting others to use human rights law effectively in their own contexts.**



BIHR and RITES Committee members giving evidence at the United Nations (Geneva)



# Genuinely UK-wide

**Human rights protections apply to everyone, everywhere — and so does our work. We are a national charity working across all four nations of the UK, ensuring that the Human Rights Act (HRA) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) are understood, embedded, and championed in every part of the country.**

Our reach reflects the shared legal and policy framework of the HRA/ECHR while recognising the distinctive contexts within England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We build relationships and deliver programmes across these nations. We work with civil society groups, communities, and public bodies to ensure that human rights are not seen as the preserve of any one region or sector, but as a universal standard across the UK and a foundation stone of devolution.

Being UK-wide strengthens our policy and advocacy work. Devolved governments and legislatures often take different approaches to human rights, creating opportunities for leadership, learning, and

resilience. BIHR's UK-wide perspective allows us to share insights between nations and support strategic coordination and solidarity. This helps ensure attacks on human rights in one part of the UK are not normalised elsewhere; and where devolved nations are able to build additional human rights protections, this is on the solid, shared foundations of the HRA and ECHR.

Our UK-wide role means:

- Working with local partners and public bodies across all four nations to embed rights in everyday systems and services.
- Providing consistent legal expertise on the HRA/ECHR

while tailoring programmes to devolved contexts.

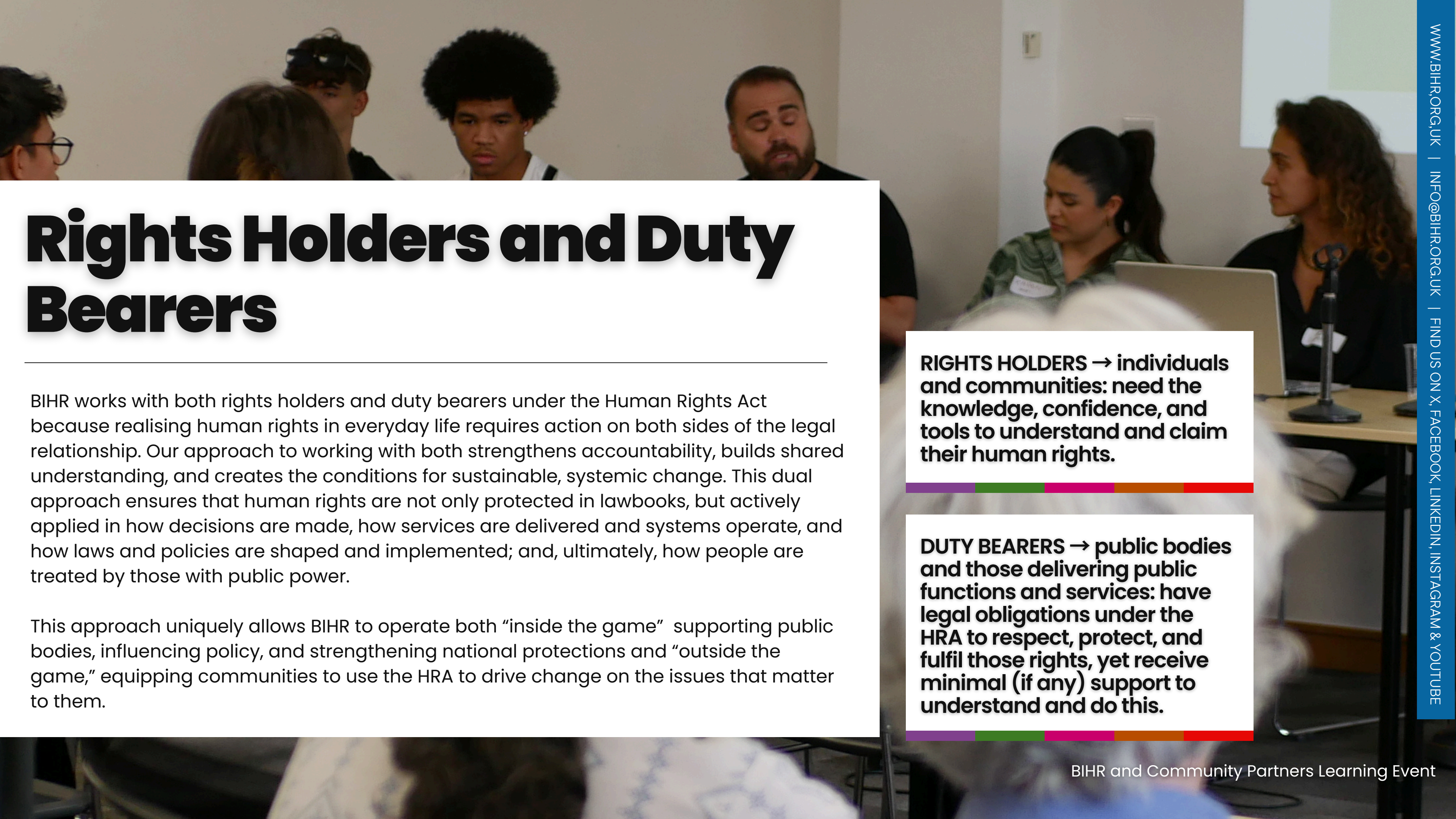
- Linking local experience to national advocacy, ensuring that authentic voices from every nation inform decision-makers.
- Acting as a bridge between civil society, public bodies, and governments across the UK to build solidarity and collective action.

This genuinely UK-wide approach is critical to BIHR's mission. It reflects the universalism of human rights and helps build a culture of respect for human rights not just in theory but in practice. And given the context, it ensures that wherever threats to the HRA/ECHR arise, we are equipped to respond with reach, credibility, and solidarity.



BIHR and Community Partners  
Workshop in London (England)





# Rights Holders and Duty Bearers

BIHR works with both rights holders and duty bearers under the Human Rights Act because realising human rights in everyday life requires action on both sides of the legal relationship. Our approach to working with both strengthens accountability, builds shared understanding, and creates the conditions for sustainable, systemic change. This dual approach ensures that human rights are not only protected in lawbooks, but actively applied in how decisions are made, how services are delivered and systems operate, and how laws and policies are shaped and implemented; and, ultimately, how people are treated by those with public power.

This approach uniquely allows BIHR to operate both “inside the game” supporting public bodies, influencing policy, and strengthening national protections and “outside the game,” equipping communities to use the HRA to drive change on the issues that matter to them.

**RIGHTS HOLDERS → individuals and communities: need the knowledge, confidence, and tools to understand and claim their human rights.**

**DUTY BEARERS → public bodies and those delivering public functions and services: have legal obligations under the HRA to respect, protect, and fulfil those rights, yet receive minimal (if any) support to understand and do this.**



# Our 5 Key Areas

We will focus on making change across five everyday systems where Human Rights Act (HRA) advocacy can make a tangible difference across communities. Focusing on these areas builds solidarity and connects human rights to people's daily lives, helping to shift hearts and minds.

We do not work in an isolated way — neither single issues nor rigid geographies or communities — because human rights are universal to all and interconnected. The HRA protections apply to everyone, and our approach is inclusive of all who can benefit from human rights law. We take a joined-up approach across sectors and issues, recognising that people's experiences of rights challenges are rarely confined to a single area.

By focusing on the systems that affect everyone, we maximise impact and build solidarity across communities and sectors.

## EDUCATION

Enabling people to learn in safe, equitable environments.

## HEALTH

Enabling people to receive care and treatment that respects dignity, autonomy, and equality.

## WELFARE

Enabling people to live with security and fairness.

## SOCIAL CARE

Enabling people to flourish and live well.

## HOUSING

Enabling people to live in sound, accessible places to call home.



# Our Strategic Aims & Objectives 2025-2031

Our Strategic Aims and Objectives for the next five years reflect BIHR's connected pipeline approach:

- community empowerment feeds into national advocacy and policy influence
- which in turn strengthens civil society networks
- this provides a proactive championing of human rights and
- secures our protections not just in law but in everyday life.

All underpinned by a sustainable, resilient BIHR.

## 1 Empower Communities & Civil Society to Advocate for People's Human Rights

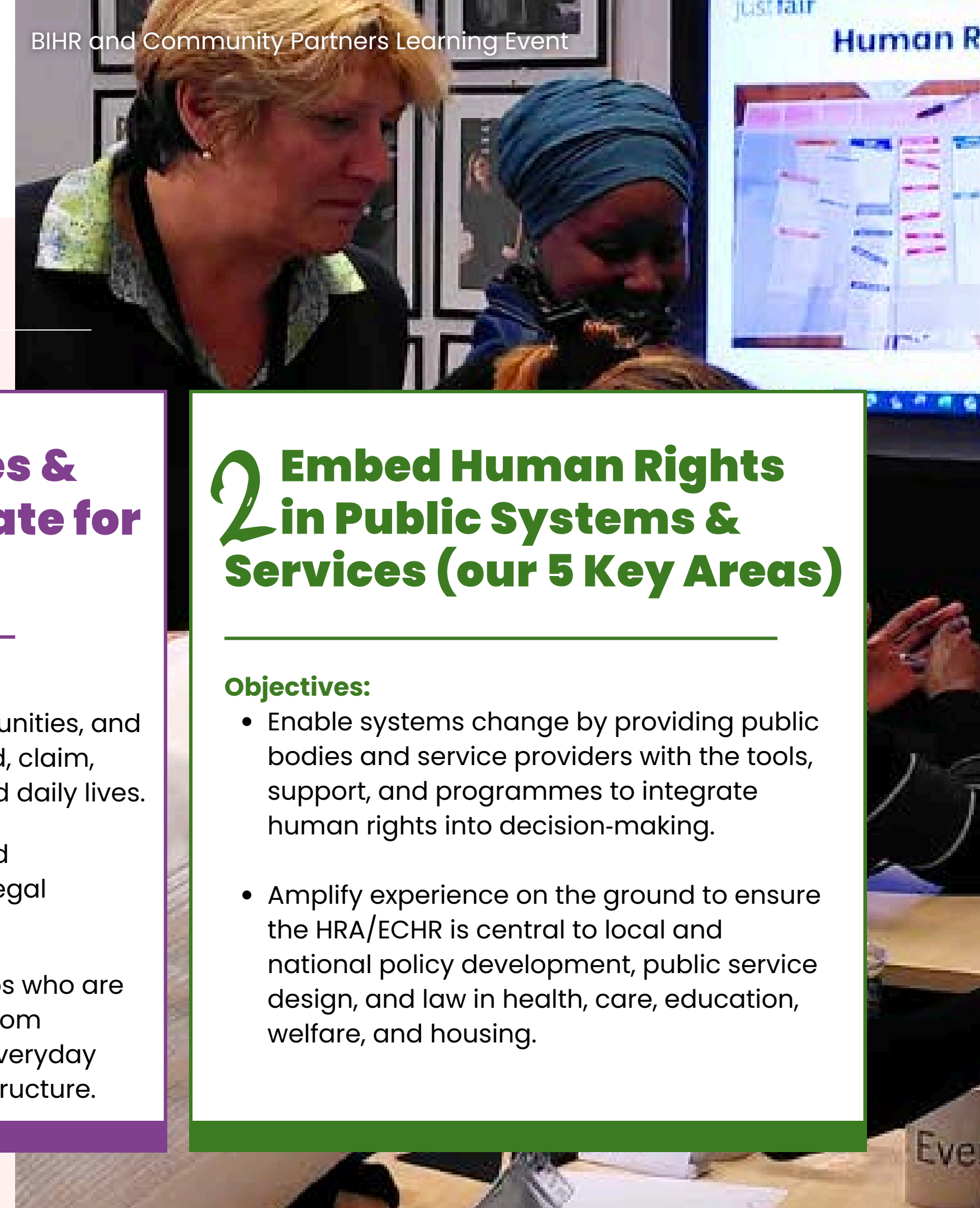
### Objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity of people, communities, and organisations across the UK to understand, claim, and embed human rights in their work and daily lives.
- Provide the information, tools, support, and programmes that strategically translate legal protections into practical action.
- For BIHR this strengthens grassroots groups who are closest to rights issues yet often furthest from support, prioritising communities facing everyday rights challenges without specialist infrastructure.

## 2 Embed Human Rights in Public Systems & Services (our 5 Key Areas)

### Objectives:

- Enable systems change by providing public bodies and service providers with the tools, support, and programmes to integrate human rights into decision-making.
- Amplify experience on the ground to ensure the HRA/ECHR is central to local and national policy development, public service design, and law in health, care, education, welfare, and housing.





# Strategic Aims & Objectives

## 3 Amplify Authentic Stories to Inform Policy and Influence Decision-Makers to Secure Human Rights

### Objectives:

- Generate, capture, and share real-life examples of human rights in action through our practical work to embed the HRA into everyday systems and services.
- Ensure that storytelling is a strategic tool for change, connecting HRA lived experience to advocacy, parliamentary engagement, and cross-sector alliances, strengthening the legitimacy of human rights law and influencing decision-makers to uphold and embed human rights.

## 4 Strengthen Action & Networks to Secure Human Rights Laws

### Objectives:

- Build a UK-wide HRA infrastructure that connects community groups, civil society, and public bodies, ensuring learning & evidence flows across sectors.
- Actively support, build, and sustain alliances across civil society, public bodies, and policy networks to advance HRA/ECHR application collectively.
- Promote solidarity, resilience, and action to defend and realise rights across the UK, sharing expertise and evidence rather than working in isolated or unconnected ways.

## 5 Secure a Sustainable and Resilient BIHR

### Objectives:

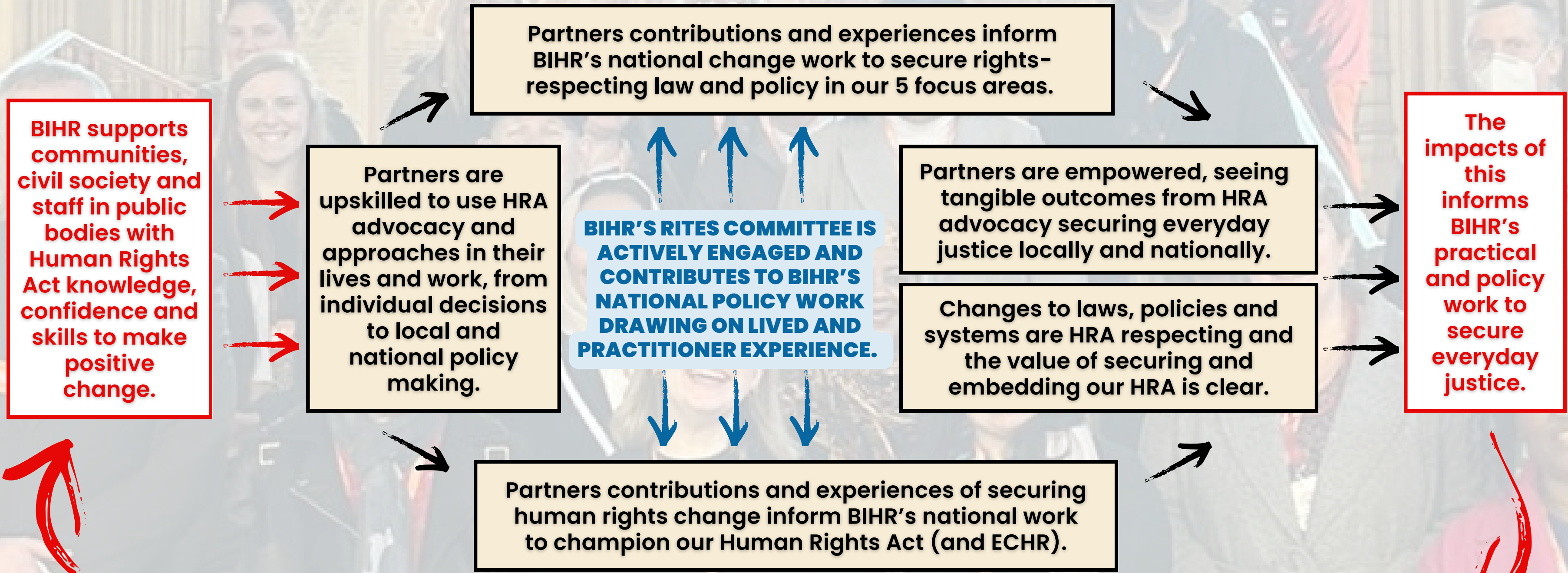
- Position BIHR as the UK's trusted HRA practice and policy authority, capable of proactive championing and embedding of human rights at all levels.
- Diversify funding streams, prioritising multi-year core support, and invest in staff development, wellbeing, and continued effective governance.
- Enhance digital infrastructure and evaluation systems to measure and communicate impact.



BIHR and Scottish Recovery Consortium Programme Cohort in Glasgow (Scotland)



# Our Model for Making Everyday Justice Happen



- Collects authentic stories of HRA advocacy at various levels of influencing to include in supports and tools materials.
- Shares successes of HRA advocacy at all levels with civil society networks.
- Uses evidence to secure funding to continue providing practical support and pursue national change work.



# The 2031 We Want to Build

---

**Widespread Embedding of Human Rights:** The HRA/ECHR is understood and applied across civil society, public bodies, and decision-making processes.

**Stronger, More Resilient Communities and Civil Society:** Communities and civil society groups are confident, capable, and networked, able to use the HRA/ECHR to drive systemic change and respond to emerging threats.

**Policy and Service Transformation:** Human rights standards shape law, policy, and public services, improving outcomes across the UK in our five key areas: health, care, welfare, education, and housing.

**Robust Championing of the Human Rights Framework:** The HRA/ECHR is politically legitimate, actively applied, and resilient to attack, securing universal rights for all.

**Cross-Community Solidarity and Action:** Strong alliances across civil society, public bodies, and networks enable coordinated and effective responses to rights challenges.

**A Sustainable and Adaptable BIHR:** We remain a trusted, independent institution with the governance, funding, and capacity to lead, support, and respond to the evolving human rights landscape.

The British Institute  
of Human Rights 

## Keep Connected

---

**EMAIL:**

[info@bihr.org.uk](mailto:info@bihr.org.uk)

**WEBISTE:**

[www.bihr.org.uk](http://www.bihr.org.uk)

**ENEWS:**

[www.bihr.org.uk/news-blogs/our-eneews](http://www.bihr.org.uk/news-blogs/our-eneews)

**CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS**

BIHR, 167-169 Great Portland Street, Fifth Floor,  
London W1W 5PF

**ANSWERPHONE:**

020 3039 3646

The British Institute of Human Rights is a registered charity (1101575) and registered company (4978121).

