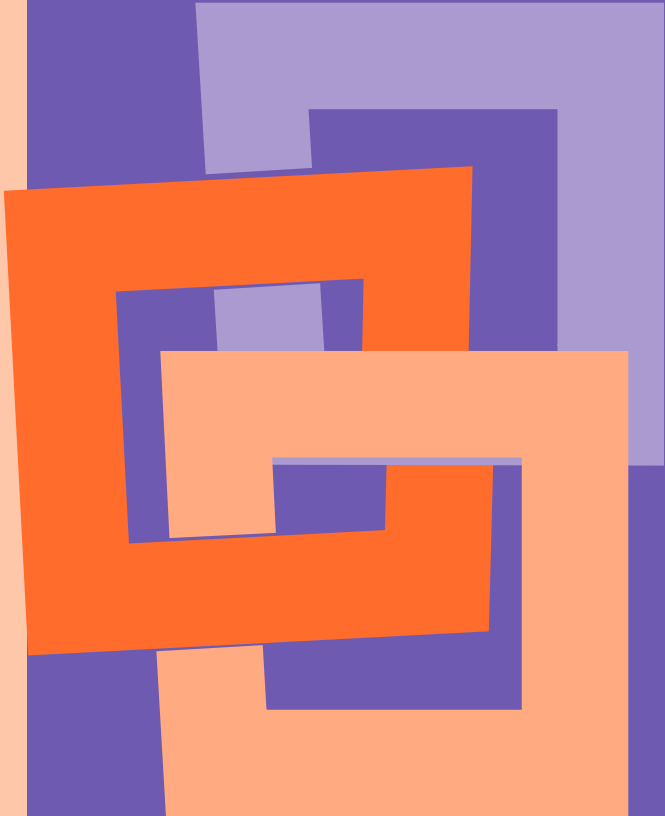


Information Note

**HUMAN RIGHTS
- HOW TO RUN
YOUR OWN
LEARNING
SESSION**



Human Rights - how to run your own learning session

About the project

Local People Linking is a project delivered by Outside the Box that raises awareness of older people's right to have a good life. The starting point is hearing about and responding to people's lived experiences in their communities.

- The project supports older people from a diverse range of communities to develop and share information about accessible activities and services happening in their area.
- We bring groups together to learn from each other and develop new opportunities so that older people are able to continue the things they enjoy doing.
- We run Learning About Rights sessions, where people explore what human rights mean to them or for the people they know and support.

This project began when older people who needed extra support told us that they felt that the people around them were focussing on keeping them safe, but at the cost of other aspects of their life that were very important to them. Older people talked about how hard it was becoming to keep in touch with friends who mattered a lot to them, get to religious services and be active in their faith community, continue to learn and make a contribution. It seemed that one human right was overriding many other human rights, and they wanted other people to realise this and talk to them about how to find the best balance for each person.

About this publication

By working with different community groups, we learned how to run successful learning sessions about human rights. We are sharing what we did so people can hold similar sessions in their communities.

- It explains the content of our sessions and what we found makes them work well.
- It gives examples of the issues that people discussed and the action points they set.
- There are case examples to show how the sessions led to more opportunities for people.

Learning About Rights sessions

Why we developed the sessions

Learning About Rights sessions come from older people's experiences. The sessions were planned and developed in partnership with older people in communities in East Renfrewshire. Older people told us they often feel Human Rights don't apply to them: the language can be too hard to understand, making it difficult to see how rights are relevant in the context of everyday life. Accessible information on rights isn't there for older people or for people working with older communities.

The people we worked with told us that getting a chance to speak about their experiences within the sessions helped them feel more confident in understanding how their rights can provide a starting point for things they'd like to change or see more of.

How we make the sessions accessible

Relevant

- We met groups at times and venues suitable to them to introduce ourselves. People have a chance to get to know us so they are as comfortable as possible before the training.
- We explain the project and why we want to meet people.
- People have time to think about what the members of the group want to get from the sessions.

Welcoming and Inclusive

- The training happens in places and at times that work for each group of people.
- We tailor sessions so that they are suited to each group to make them work for people with a range of different learning styles and personal circumstances such as disabilities.
- Our sessions are delivered at a pace that is comfortable for the group and offer a variety of ways the sessions can be delivered.
- From what people tell us at first meetings we develop a Learning About Rights session informed by some of the lived experiences of the group.
- Sessions are interactive so that people can learn as much from each other as they do from the training.

Practical

- By the end of each session people come away with agreed action points
- Some points are for themselves and for key decision makers in their local area.
- Some points are for us, so we can make the next session work well for the people involved, or take issues on in other parts of the overall project.



"I need to know my rights so I feel confident about telling other people who might need help. Human rights start with us."



"We really enjoyed having the chance to speak about what matters to us, it can feel sometimes like people don't realise how much it takes just to get along to things."

What the sessions look like

Usually we hold a series of three sessions with a couple of weeks between each one.

We start with an overview of the concept of human rights and explain the Human Rights Act in everyday language. Then we talk about the United Nations Principles for Older Persons.

We use the UN Principles for Older People as a conversation tool to help people think about how each principle might apply to their lives or people they know. This helps the group describe the benefits to achieving their rights.

From the things people tell us in our introductory meeting, we put together simple discussion topics to get discussion started on everyday issues. This lets people put rights in the context of what happens in people's everyday lives.

The next stage is thinking about solutions for change. We invite the group to think about the most important points from their discussions and consider what things are achievable in their

immediate communities. Groups share their ideas about what they can do and who they can call on for support. This helps the people taking part to focus on their strengths and what can be achieved as individuals and as a group or working in other collective ways.

The group lists their action points that will lead to positive changes, or at least start the process of finding solutions:

- Actions they can do themselves.
- Actions they can do with help from people they know.
- Actions they can do by finding out who can help tackle issues.

Practical points on running sessions

These are the main points we have learned from running sessions in East Renfrewshire and other locations.

- It helps when each session is with groups of people who already know each other or have something in common by living and/or working in the local area.
- Sessions work well with a group of people who come together regularly who want to share their experiences and think about what their group could do in different ways supported by Learning About Rights.
- Bring people together from a variety of experiences and roles- for us this included statutory and voluntary sector settings, people working with older people as well as from services used by the whole community and a diverse range of community groups.

- Make the time to meet groups before the first session to give an opportunity to get to know each other.
- Offer taster sessions. This was a good way for people to find out more to help them decide what sort of sessions would be useful for their groups.
- Use simple evaluation tools so that the group can feedback quickly at the end of each session. This helped us find out what to improve in the next session without taking up more of people's time.
- We offered follow up sessions to support the group over a longer period if they wanted us to help follow up on action points and share learning from other groups.

Content of the sessions

Our Human Rights

- The right to life.
- The prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.
- Protection against slavery and forced labour.
- The right to liberty and freedom.
- The right to a fair trial and no punishment without law.
- Respect for privacy and family life and the right to marry.
- Freedom of thought, religion and belief.
- Free speech and peaceful protest.
- No discrimination: everyone's rights are equal.
- Protection of property.
- The right to an education.
- The right to free elections.

Human Rights are there for every person resident in the United Kingdom, regardless of whether or not they are a British citizen or a foreign national, a child or an adult. Human rights can even apply to companies or organisations.

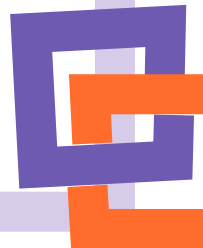
United Nations Principles for Older Persons

Independence

- 1 Older persons should have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help.
- 2 Older persons should have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income generating opportunities.
- 3 Older persons should be able to participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labour force takes place.
- 4 Older persons should have access to appropriate educational and training programmes.
- 5 Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities.
- 6 Older persons should be able to reside at home for as long as possible.

Participation

- 7 Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations.
- 8 Older persons should be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities.
- 9 Older persons should be able to form movements or associations of older persons.



Care

- 10 Older persons should benefit from family and community care and protection in accordance with each society's system of cultural values.
- 11 Older persons should have access to health care to help them to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness.
- 12 Older persons should have access to social and legal services to enhance their autonomy, protection and care.
- 13 Older persons should be able to utilize appropriate levels of institutional care providing protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a humane and secure environment.
- 14 Older persons should be able to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care or treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and the quality of their lives.

Self-fulfilment

- 15 Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential.
- 16 Older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society.

Dignity

- 17 Older persons should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse.
- 18 Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.

Community discussion topics

The people taking part in your sessions will talk about the issues that affect them. These are examples of the topics people discussed in our project.

What it looks like when people can achieve their rights

"There are enough supports to ensure people get to keep up the things they enjoy".

"Social isolation is an issue but there are plenty of options for people."

"It's easy to access the services I need in my area."

"There are plenty of opportunities to integrate with other groups in our local community".

"People are part of decisions that affect them."

"It's easy to get about on public transport."

People's experiences of how things are for them

"Cut backs effect our access - services take time to get to you, you can give up while you're waiting."

"There needs to be more support for volunteers who are doing good work. Just because you're doing well, doesn't mean you shouldn't get help."

"We would like to get to know more about other groups, meet new people and welcome new members to our group."

"Some staff are good and easy to talk to. With others, it can feel as if they forget you are a person."

"There are a lot of groups in Barrhead but they are hard to get to because the public transport system is so bad."

"People get in touch to see if we can visit people at home, but we can't. We do a lot - that's why people keep contacting us to help even if they live further away in another part of East Renfrewshire."

Examples of solutions for change

These are examples of group action points from Learning About Rights sessions in East Renfrewshire.

We can

- Become more aware of how to challenge stigma.
- Develop training to make more people aware of the issues people face.
- Contact our local Councillors to make them aware of the issues we are facing.
- Use existing supports that are good for us, such as health centres, advocates and friends.
- Talk first to the people who listen and then plan from there.

We can and know who can

- Get help from the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Use good contacts with the local authority.
- Contact the bus company.
- Contact those who provide help from churches, libraries and local Councillors.

We can't, but we can find out who can

- Raise awareness of the impact of services stopping with local MSPs and ask them to help us.
- Make links with community councils about the lack of accessible information.

Examples of content and the impact of Learning About Rights sessions

What people told us is important to them

Access to information

Groups described how there are pockets in East Renfrewshire where there is good information but that it is mostly in a written format in leaflets, on screens in local authority buildings etc. These ways of sharing information are not accessible to people who struggle to get out or who have literacy issues. People told us it is taken for granted that they have internet access, but this is often not the case. People often cannot afford laptops, smart phones, or do not feel they have the skills needed to navigate online.

Word of mouth seems to be the preferred way to find out what's happening and positive relationships are key to getting out and trying new things. Groups are building this in to their future plans.

Public transport

Public transport across East Renfrewshire impacts people's lives in a number of different ways. On the whole, people felt the service was extremely poor, meaning they were unable to access health, education, information, new groups or be able to socialise past 7pm out-with their immediate area. There is real frustration with the transport system, given it plays such a significant role in undermining people's equal access to services and the things they enjoy doing.

Stigma

People told us they often felt judged in their local community because of their disability and sometimes faced stigma in their social groups. Groups felt there was a lack of understanding around people with mental illness, living with dementia or who have other additional disabilities. This included a lack of understanding regarding service provision.

Integration

A lack of accessible information can be a major barrier to integration, particularly if English is not your first language. Older people who experience racism in their local community can be made to feel unsafe at times and that there is still a lack of understanding of different cultures and ethnicities. People told us that reporting in the mainstream media can fuel this.

People were really keen to meet with new groups across different faiths and cultures to share learning and support diversity across East Renfrewshire for people of any age.

Participation

People felt disempowered by a lack of understanding from some services in their area about their cultural needs. People felt that some decisions had been made by services without involving them in the decision and without full knowledge of their circumstances and rights.

People had found that feeling part of decision making processes, particularly in relation to how Self-directed Support is allocated, was usually about relationships with workers. It made a huge difference to people when they felt workers took the time to get to know them and explain the process.

Case study

Background

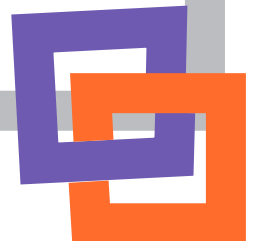
At a Learning About Rights session with a local older people's group, people raised concerns about a sudden change to older residents care packages. Until recently, the local authority paid for a care company to deliver a care package to residents of the local sheltered housing complex. The residents had been receiving care from their care workers for a number of years and had good relationships with them. They liked that the same people came each day at the times they expect - the care workers provided reassurance and a routine as well as good care.

Context

Residents were recently sent a letter from the local authority telling them that their care package would be changing. Within 10 days residents were to expect a new company to provide the care and new care workers. The letter had jargon and phrases people did not understand and no other communication had taken place regarding the change.

Residents spoke to each other to ask if they received the same letter - everyone had. When the care workers came the residents asked them about the change and why this had happened. The care workers were unaware such a decision had been taken, finding out first from the residents that they only had 10 days left to work with their clients.

In our session, the group raised this as a serious issue that related to their rights to have friendships as well as to support that lets them achieve other rights.



The people at the learning session asked if the Outside the Box team had any contacts in the Health and Social Care Partnership who could explain why this decision was taken without any prior consultation with the residents and care workers.

Outcome

Outside the Box continued to have contact with the residents to support their conversations with the staff at the Sheltered Housing complex and Health and Social Care Partnership in East Renfrewshire. Despite the change of care decision being made without their prior involvement, people told us that gaining a better understanding of what was happening helped them affirm it was their right to question why the decision had been taken in the first place.

Positive outcomes

Causeway group

This group comes together to support each other around their mental health and wellbeing. The group said that they would like to develop awareness raising sessions around mental health and disability to help people in their local community become more aware of the challenges faced by group members and other people affected by poor mental wellbeing. They would like to take this training to schools in their local area.

Fairweather group

The Fairweather group brings together older people from different ethnic and religious groups in East Renfrewshire.

As part of the follow up to the Learning About Rights sessions, the group are to meet with the Health and



Social Care Partnership to become a host of 'Talking Points': this is a drop-in service provided by the Health and Social Care Partnership for people to find out about health and social care provision in their local community.

Local People Linking also supported the Fairweather group to further challenge social isolation in the work they do by working with them to organise an outing for the older members of the group who find it difficult to get out.

'Blether and a Brew' group at Newton Mearns Kirk

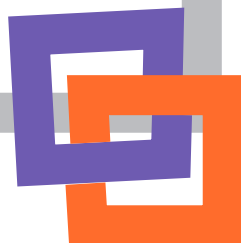
The group come together every two weeks for home baking, tea and coffee. Older members of the Kirk are supported to come along by volunteers in the group.

The group found out about sources of support for what they do and got in touch with people who can help them sustain the good volunteering work they provide to the local community.

East Renfrewshire Disability Action (ERDA)

ERDA is a disability organisation that works to campaign for the rights of disabled people across East Renfrewshire at a local and national level.

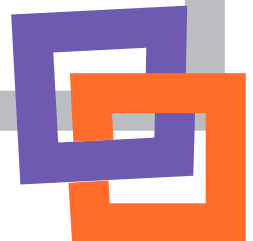
As part of our partnership work, Local People Linking have been working with ERDA to support their Big Lunch Events to encourage people from East Renfrewshire to link up from different backgrounds, ages and roles across their communities. In the past year over 300 people from the community attended as part of the celebrations as well as local services and organisations.



ACUMEN Mental Health programme Pulse radio 98.4

From our partnership work with RAMH Causeway group, we were invited as guests on the local Pulse 98.4 Barrhead ACUMEN programme for Mental Health. ACUMEN is a network of people who use mental health services to help shape mental health services and raise awareness in the wider community.

We highlighted some of the human rights issues older people face and how these can affect people's mental and physical health and wellbeing as they get older. The project has been invited back to speak about some of the findings from our work in East Renfrewshire.



Contact and more information

Local People Linking is funded by the Scottish Government as part of the Promoting Equality and Cohesion Fund.

Contact

Please get in touch if you are interested in Learning About Rights sessions or any other aspect of the project.

Outside the Box
3.10 The Whisky Bond
2 Dawson Road, Glasgow, G4 9SS

T. 0141 419 0451
jill.k@otbds.org
www.otbds.org



There is more about what we do at www.otbds.org



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

