

Local People Linking creates the space for older people to come together to learn about their rights in an everyday context, to shape their local communities and the services in them, so they can exercise their rights for a better life.

This resource shares the learning of what rights are important to the communities we work with and the difference it makes when people can access their rights.

## “Communities make Human Rights come to life”

Creating an inclusive digital community became our new reality in early 2020. Taking part in online spaces has become part of how we exercise our human rights in our daily lives. Even though we couldn't meet with older people in their communities, we were able to create new digital spaces as part of our learning about rights sessions, to bring people together and hear about what rights are important to them in an everyday context.

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

**Participation:** This is about how we involve people in the decisions we make, with communities, partnerships and associations- in a way that is community led. When delivering our online learning about rights sessions, we asked groups what rights were important to them and worked with them to create their own Human Rights Charters. A vital part of raising awareness of our rights, is ensuring people with lived experience are the people who shape the discussions and resources. Their stories are what brings human rights to life.

**Community discussion topic:** Are there enough groups and supports that recognise diversity and people's different interests?

“Some groups treat you like you are different because you have a disability. Being told you can't do things all the time holds you back and creates more barriers to taking part in things.”

“Being supported to participate online has helped us to keep connected and feel less lonely. This gives me something to look forward to and the option of digital means you can choose how to participate.”

**Accountability:** When working with different groups and communities, it's important to think about and share how people's rights are being affected in an everyday context. This helps us to work together to create channels for actions and solutions when issues arise. To do this, it's helpful to support people to make best use of their community networks and help them identify new associations for working together. Sharing this learning with different networks means we build on our learning and making sure communities are given feedback, is an integral part of how to stay accountable.

**Community discussion topic:** Are services responsive to people's needs- do you feel listened to?

“COVID is having a bad impact on mental health. It was bad anyway but getting support from mental health services is almost impossible now. The influx of people needing help has put stress on a system that didn't work anyway- all these system problems pre-date COVID.”

“We need mental health services that don't force you into a 'category' so that you can get help.”

### The PANEL principles and how we can all apply these as a human rights approach.

**Legality:** Public bodies and services all have a role to play in upholding our rights. By trying to work in collaboration with the services and public bodies who play a part in our everyday lives, we are better able to raise awareness of the different approaches across our communities that fully support people's cultural, social, economic and political rights.

**Community discussion topic:** What does Human Rights and social care mean to you?

“Services assume that being safe is all that matters for older people, not our other rights too such as friendships, learning and practicing our faith.”

“During Covid community supports showed how to be flexible with no stigma. We want to see more of this.”

**Empowerment:** Having a safe space for people to come together is a good place for people to begin to lead their own agenda for self-empowerment around their rights. Setting rights in an everyday context, in accessible language helps make them real. It's then possible to link these everyday experiences with our rights and gives space to think about how different policies and practices can affect our lives.

**Community discussion topic:** Does your community feel safe- do you feel connected to it?

“All the libraries are being shut down in my area- even though it's a place lots of people use. I feel safe in my library, it's the first place I learned how to use a computer and got access to digital help. I don't think it's fair they are shutting off people's options like this and how they get information.”

“I feel disconnected to my local community- transport links are really bad – the bus comes once an hour and the walk to Tesco takes 25 minutes. Even then it's not easy to access if you have poor mobility – there are no pavements or safe routes to get there.”

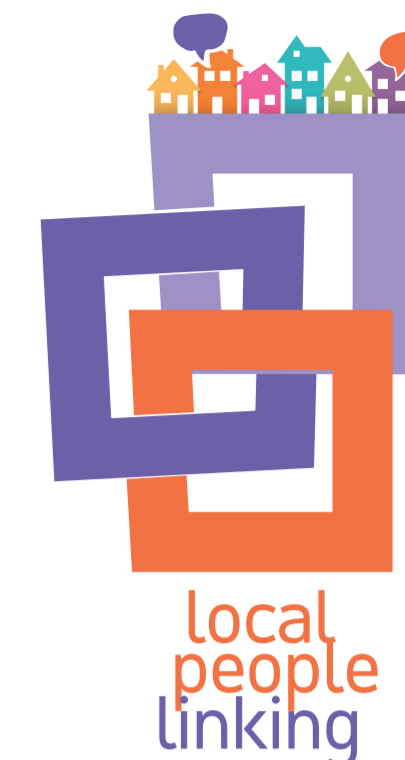
**Non-discrimination:** An integral part of supporting people to access their rights is about working in a way that ensures people are treated fairly without discrimination, especially when working with groups who face lots of different barriers. Taking an intersectional approach to the different barriers people might face by treating them as individuals, can help people access their rights in a way that makes sense in their everyday lives.

**Community discussion topic:**

Do the services and groups in your area understand equality and human rights?

“People's views need to change of disabled people - a lot of people think you are stupid because you have a disability.”

“As an older LGBT person moving into supported housing, I was fearful of being open about who I am because I have friends who actually hid their sexuality again because of how they were treated in care, but I had good supports that helped me move and I feel accepted where I am.”



[Click here](#) to see our series of animated videos that were made by the communities we worked with through our Learning about Rights sessions.



### Contact

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

jill.k@otbds.org  
www.otbds.org

