

Connecting Equalities works with a diverse range of older people and older people's groups focusing on their everyday experiences of equalities and human rights. It creates the space for older people to come together, to shape their local communities and services, so they can exercise their rights for a better life.

*“Communities make Human Rights come to life”*

This resource explores the PANEL tool created by the Scottish Human Rights Commission, and the rights that are important to communities we work with.

Please get in touch if you are interested and would like to know more [ingrid@otbds.org](mailto:ingrid@otbds.org)  
[www.otbds.org](http://www.otbds.org)

**P**articipation

**A**ccountability

The **PANEL** principles help to ensure that rights are at the core of how projects, campaigns, organisations, policy and practice is developed.

**N**on-discrimination

**L**egality

**E**mpowerment



connecting equalities



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

## Participation:

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?**

"Having different ways to participate works really well for me and then I get to choose how and when I want to get involved. Some days its great to join other people and talk through the issues. But some days I find that very hard so having online options means my views still count too."

## Empowerment:

It's about having a safe space for people to think about and lead their own agenda for self-empowerment around their rights.

Setting rights in an everyday context, using everyday language helps make them real. Then linking these experiences with our rights, and 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."

## Accountability:

It starts with being accountable to the people and communities - checking things out, giving feedback, sharing what's happening the changes made, and thanking people.

It is also about connecting people with community networks and identifying ways to work together.

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

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

## Non-discrimination:

This is about working in a way that ensures people are treated fairly without discrimination. Treating people as individuals, especially when they might face lots of different barriers and challenges, can help people access their rights in their every day 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."

## Legality:

Public bodies and services all have a role to play in upholding our rights. By working in collaboration, 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."

