



## Help us to protect the Human Rights Act

### We stand together as Advocacy, Information & Advice Charities calling on the Prime Minister and our government to protect the Human Rights Act

On May 18th 2022, we wrote to the Prime Minister to raise our concerns about the proposed scrapping of the Human Rights Act, and the proposed introduction of the Bill of Rights.

The Elfrida Society has collaborated with over 40 Advocacy, Information and Advice Charities to bring attention to the important rights and protections the Human Rights Act offers our collective beneficiaries to live as equal people and to be treated with dignity.

Our letter to the Prime Minister can be read below in full. The letter was organised by the national advocacy Charity POhWER.

To have your Charity or Organisation added to this letter digitally, be added to the mailing list for future campaign activity or for other queries relating to this letter please contact POhWER Chief Executive at [helen.moulinos@pohwer.net](mailto:helen.moulinos@pohwer.net) or Dolly Galvis [dolly.galvis@elfrida.com](mailto:dolly.galvis@elfrida.com) at the Elfrida Society who can support you with your query.

### We stand together as Advocacy, Information & Advice charities and organisations calling on the Prime Minister and our government to protect the Human Rights Act



The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street,  
Westminster,  
London  
SW1A 2AA

May 18, 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

### **Human Rights Act & Proposed Bill of Rights**

We the undersigned represent Charities and organisations who have supported millions of people to have their rights upheld and voices heard through advocacy, information, and advice since the Human Rights Act was introduced.

The UK has and continues to be a leader in the development and contributor of human rights law over the last hundred years. Since joining the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention) we have been bound to comply with its provisions. The Human Rights Act brought rights home and created an important obligation for public authorities to comply with ECHR.

The Human Rights Act commits public authorities to comply with the European Convention of Human Rights in their policies, procedures and decision making. As advocates we see the positive impact Human Rights Act has had on the people we support through our charitable work.

Without the Human Rights Act, the modern advocacy profession might not exist with the same powerful impact or independent scrutiny. The Human Rights Act is at the epi-centre of a framework of rights and entitlements complemented by the Equality Act, Care Act, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, Liberty Protection Safeguards, Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act, related legislation in the devolved nations and Safeguarding.

Thanks to the Human Rights Act as advocates, we are able to independently challenge public authorities that support us in our everyday lives.

We help people to live as equal people through the cases we manage to have their human rights upheld in public services.

Advocacy is one of the many ways in which people can be supported and empowered to uphold their rights and entitlements, be provided with choices and options, and safeguarded from harm and abuse. An advocate can help a person to:

- speak up for themselves or give their views
- understand the process they are going through, their rights and what choices are available to them
- be part of an important decision which is being made about them

- prepare for and take part in meetings and tribunals
- raise queries or concerns
- access information in the format which is most suitable
- access services that can support them

Advocates can also provide information and signpost people to other helpful services. Our intervention often means people do not need to access justice through the courts or legal pathway as our intervention empowers people and protects their human rights.

The current laws protect everyone in the UK no matter who they are or what their own situation may be. The proposed reforms would significantly reduce the legal responsibilities the Government currently has towards us and diminish mechanisms for our collective Charity beneficiaries to hold public services accountable and to be treated as equal people.

The proposed Bill of Rights would offer opt-outs to public authorities to pick and choose whose rights they supported and if/when they supported those rights. Many of the people we support are socially excluded, vulnerable and/or marginalised.

To focus this consultation on just a few minor legal technicalities and procedural nuances is diminishing the wider role the HRA 1998 plays to support people in everyday life and enable them to live as dignified people. Without HRA 1998, there would be no clear rulebook to govern expectations of conduct when dealing with public services such as Statutory Bodies, Local Authority, Prisons, NHS, DWP, Immigration, Housing and Coroner Service.

We believe the changes proposed are detrimental to our beneficiaries and would remove independent scrutiny of public services and the important role of advocacy.

We are calling on a wider study and equality impact assessment to understand the realities on the wider UK population, requesting for a meeting to share case studies and evidence on how HRA benefits the people we support every day through public authority independent scrutiny and mitigates often wider escalations in the legal process. Scrapping HRA would be detrimental to our beneficiaries, public authorities and wreak havoc with framework of other intersecting rights laws and codes of practices.

Our society remains unfair and unequal – the millions of people who sought support through our Charities should serve as significant reminder that the Human Rights Act 1998 and other protection laws are not currently being necessarily always upheld by local and central government bodies. Independent scrutiny, challenge, and freedom for people to empower themselves is a fundamental part of our society and democracy.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Moulinos, Chief Executive, POhWER

Jo Moore, CEO, Accommodation Concern  
Peter Walsh, Chief Executive, Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA)  
Mr Abe Ncube, Advocacy 1<sup>st</sup>, Community Connex  
Leanne Hignett, Service Delivery Director, Advocacy Focus  
Elssa Keegan, CEO, Advocacy Matters  
Judith Davey, Chief Executive Officer, The Advocacy Project  
Sabrina Solomon, Head of Service Delivery, The Advocacy Project  
Ian Maxey, Deputy Head of Service Delivery, The Advocacy Project  
Natasha Fox, CEO, Advocacy West Wales-Eiriolaeth Gorllewin Cymru  
Philip Bramson, Chief Executive, Advonet  
Ewan Roberts, Centre Manager, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Sr Ruth Miller, Volunteer, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Theresa Mawson, Volunteer, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Kevin Keech, Volunteer, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Bridie Sharkey, Trustee, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Kacey Jones, Volunteer, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Peter Simm, Volunteer, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Ged Edwards, Volunteer, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Gareth Hankinson, Staff, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Steve Hawkins, Trustee, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Mike Storry, Volunteer, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Dr Paula Grey, Trustee, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Shahzad Wilson Mukerjee, Volunteer, Asylum Link Merseyside  
Hilary Hopkin, Volunteer, Asylum Link Merseyside  
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Chris Vick, Service Director, Advocacy Services for North East Wales (ASNEW)  
Emily Barratt, Deputy Director, Brighton and Hove Speak Out  
Chris Mounsher, Advocate, Brighton and Hove Speak Out  
Emma Lopez, Engagement officer, Brighton and Hove Speak Out  
Jeanette Goodman, Advocacy Team Leader, Brighton and Hove Speak Out  
Sarah Coombes, Volunteer Coordinator, Brighton and Hove Speak Out  
Sanchita Hosali, CEO, British Institute of Human Rights  
Philip Kerr, Carers Federation

Angus Claydon, Director of Operations, The Care Forum  
Kevin Peltonen-Messenger, CEO, The Care Forum  
Michèle Stokes, Chief Executive Officer, Carers in Hertfordshire  
Roma Mills, Policy and Engagement Manager, Carers in Hertfordshire  
Colin Ling CEO, Chinese Wellbeing  
Di Burbidge Service Development Manager, Chinese Wellbeing  
Jack Davey, Advice Service Lead, CHAS Bristol  
Alice Tibbert, Director, CHAS Bristol  
Suzi Henderson, CEO, Cloverleaf Advocacy  
Cherry Pedler, Manager, Community Support Network South London (CSN)  
Garrick Prayogg, Project Manager, Cultural Diversity Network  
Maria Dolly Galvis Zapata, Chief Executive Officer, The Elfrida Society  
Ali F. Jabeen, Operations Manager, Specialist Advocacy Services for Parents with Learning Disabilities and/or Difficulties, The Elfrida Society  
Deborah Kober Specialist Advocates for Adults and Parents with Learning Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties, The Elfrida Society  
Janay Crooks, Specialist Advocates for Adults and Parents with Learning Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties, The Elfrida Society  
Nikki Chivers, Group Facilitator for Adults with Learning Disabilities, The Elfrida Society  
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Ben Whalley, Head of Operations, Gaddum  
Caroline Ridley CEO, Impact Initiatives  
Louise Peim Operations and Contracts Manager, Impact Initiatives  
Sam Grant, Head of Policy and Campaigns, Liberty  
Katy Porter, CEO, Manor Gardens Welfare Trust  
Saiqa Sahotra Community Advocate, Mary Seacole House  
Alex Coombes Specialist Advocate, Mary Seacole House  
Ben Allen Community Advocate, Mary Seacole House  
Miatta Mac-Boimah Outreach Worker, Mary Seacole House  
Simon Torkington Advocacy and Training Manager, Mary Seacole House  
Dr Melvin Bradley, CEO, MhIST  
Gillian Unsworth, CEO, Mind in Brighton and Hove  
Sharn Tomlinson, Chief Executive Officer, Mind in Mid Herts

Michelle Kabia, CEO, Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham

Fiona Scaife, Operational Director for Advocacy Services, Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham

Shelu Miah, Operations Director, Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham

Rita Hirani, CEO MindOut.

Mandy Bigden-Slack, Advocacy Service Manager, MindOut

Teresa Jennings, Chief Executive, n-compass

Rita Waters, Group Chief Executive, NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)

Kate Harvey CEO, Onside Advocacy

Suzanne Watterson Advocacy Services Manager, Onside Advocacy

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